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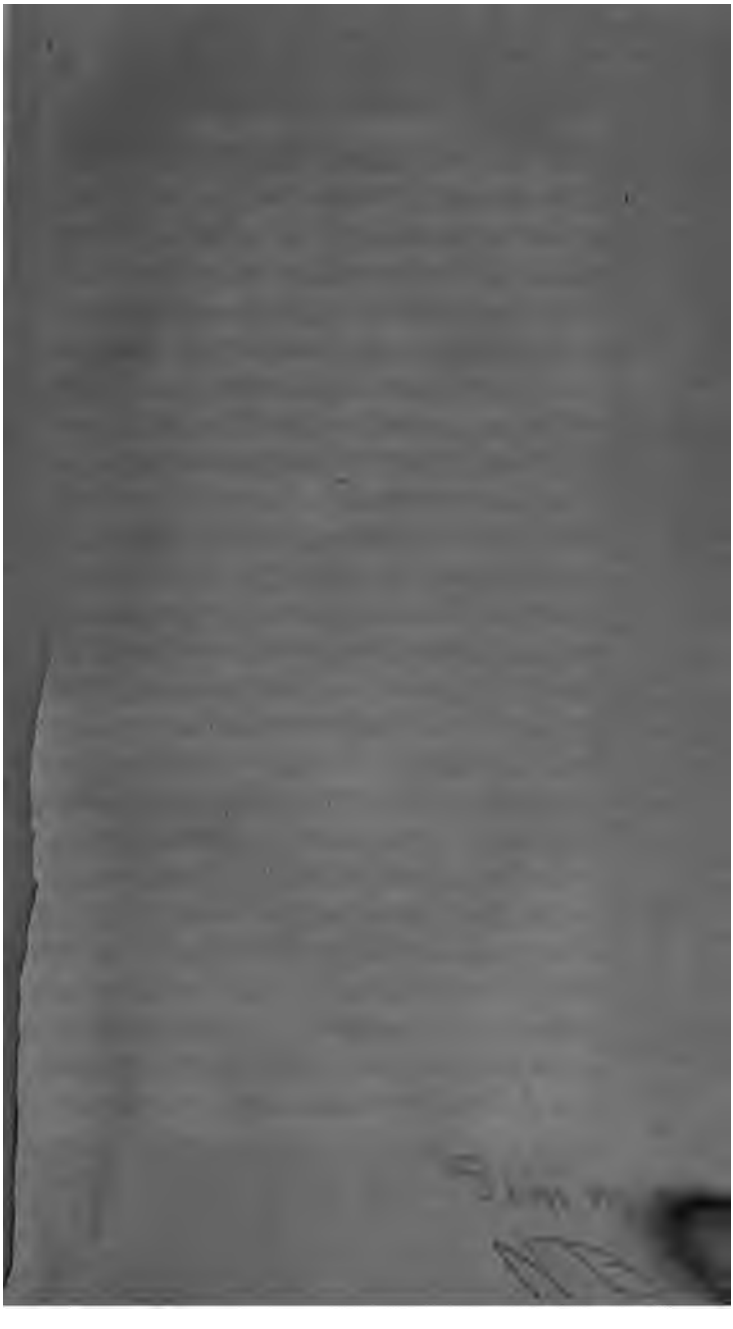

MARTIN FABER,

THE STORY OF A CRIMINAL;

AND OTHER TALES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE YEMASSEE," "GUY RIVERS,"
"MELLICHAMPE," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,
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1837.

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THE SINS OF TYPOGRAPHY.

"Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm, in erecting a grammar-school; and whereas, before, our forefathers had no other books but the score and tally, thou hast caused printing to be used; and, contrary to the king, his crown and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face that thou hast men about thee that usually talk of a noun and a verb, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear. Thou hast appointed justices of peace to call poor men before them about matters they were not able to answer. Moreover, thou hast put them in prison, and, because they could not read, thou hast hanged them; when, indeed, only for that cause, they had been most worthy to live."—SHAKSPEARE.

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THE SINS OF TYPOGRAPHY.

I.

It was no idle caprice among the Germans which persuaded them to charge old Faust, the printer, with diablerie. The devil has more to do with printing than people imagine. The art is not less a bad than a black art, and it is sheer folly to deny it. The sins of typography exceed all computation, and throw all other sorts of sin into the shade: and, say what you will, the mystery could only have originated with that potentist of all the ancient sinners, whom I shall not here more especially designate.

I am talking no idle thing—nothing at random—nothing without due deliberation. I am serious—serious as a judge—and desire that I should not be misunderstood. I look upon the art of printing as among the primest inventions of the Satanics. It must have been the scheme of that prince of schemers, old Beelzebub himself; and this opinion

I will maintain, tooth and nail. All its features tell of its paternity. Look, now, at its great screws and presses—its ponderous masses of lead —its huge irons—its mystic signs and characters—not to speak of the thick, smutty, slippery stuff which they call ink. Then regard the names given to its instruments and agents, and doubt longer if you can. The first time I set foot in a printing-office, judge of my horror to find myself followed, from part to part of the establishment, by a grinning, sinister-looking urchin, whom, without the slightest scruple, and with the most open audacity, they styled "the devil,"—a begrimed and sooty imp, whose visage was quite enough, without the name, to satisfy me as to the who and what were his connexions. But, as if this were not enough, and in utter defiance of decency, an old shoe, nailed to the wall, and containing their broken and defective types, most familiarly and irreverently, they called "the hell." This alone should be enough to satisfy a wise and reasonable person of the true character of this dangerous art; but, if more be necessary, I am the very one to give it.

And, let me ask, how else, unless we recognise the infernal origin ascribed to this institution, are we to account for the mysterious influence which

it exercises over men, however removed from one another—however differing in make, character, constitution, and necessity. A man took up a newspaper (so called) one day in my presence—it was the very first I had ever seen—and in an instant, such a change I never witnessed in the behaviour or countenance of man before. Though the gentlest creature usually, and only a moment previous smiling and good-humoured, he now foamed like a chafed tiger; and, sticking his fingers through the printing, tore and disfigured it in the most astonishing manner.

"Why, what's the to-do?" said I; and he then told me how his friend in Kentucky had lost his election. That was bad news—and all came from the newspapers and the printers. He was then a thousand miles off, and the defeat of his friend would not have made him unhappy but for them. They whisked it into his ear from that great distance, and could only have done so through the agency of witchcraft.

II.

THE moment I heard of printing, it made me melancholy. I beheld the ruinous prospects which

it would bring along with it. I saw that a power so terrible, so many-handed and many-winged, would penetrate into all places, and leave no privacy secure; that it would pluck the feelings from out our hearts, and the thoughts from out our minds, and thus make those affections public which are only sweet when they are sacred and hidden. I saw, too, that my peculiar occupation was about to be taken from me, and that all my joys and triumphs were, from that fatal hour, to undergo rapid diminution. My home was in a quiet village on the banks of the Arkansas, to which, hitherto, newspapers, and printers, and persecution had never come. How happy were our people, young and old, without any exception. We had no strife —we knew no discontent. There were no artificial standards of taste or of opinion, to make one discontented with his own, and jealous of the person or the pretensions of his neighbour. We knew nothing of books. At evening, when the labours of the farm and garden would be over, I told stories and sung the prettiest songs to them, and all of them loved me. They would gather at sunset before our cottage door, Marian Clifford sitting closer to me than all the rest, and I would tell them of the old Indian chief whose tribe dwelt

upon the very spot of our own dwelling; and day after day, and night after night, from one year's end to the other, we assembled in this manner, in sweet ignorance, together, and the recital of lay and legend was my happiest employment. Such was the effect of this exercise upon my memory, that I became at length the chronicler of our settlement, and the events of our people's history had no other record. You may readily judge of my importance. You can easily understand how it was that my legends of the past, put into verse and sung along with the reed music, at which I was no little adept, gave me the influence that was surely mine in our forest habitation. I was happy —we were all happy—till one day a strange, wayfaring man came among us, and brought us books —and we were never happy again. All of us but myself took to reading, and, after that, I could scarcely get a word with anybody—not even with Marian Clifford—and but few came to listen to my legends. There was no society among us after that. We all grew selfish, and the accursed books now absorbed all the time and talent we had hitherto bestowed upon one another. They taught us selfishness. They taught us to be independent of human aids and affections. They taught us ambi-

tion—a discontent with our lot—and aims and objects never thought upon before. Then came vanity and pride, not to speak of the thousand other prime lessons of evil which may be conjectured to have been in the thought of the dark spirit when inventing the pernicious art of printing. Happily for me, when all others had surrendered themselves up to this new influence, I was firm. I refused to learn their dangerous, though perhaps seductive lessons. I would not even look into the deadly books, but went aside from the rest, and strolled away among the hollows, and under the thickest shadows of the forest, abandoning myself to a solitude far more pleasant to my mind than that which was now forced upon me in our village. The accursed stranger was now about to go—but not before he had placed a spell upon all but myself, which, from its effects, could never have come from any but a diabolical origin. For aught I know—and I must confess I sometimes thought —he was the old Satan himself. If he was not, I nevertheless do not harm him much—since he to whom I have likened him could never have done us much greater injury. But he was preparing to go, and left us many volumes, to which he gave the strange misnomer of "Moral Essays"—a name,

which, of itself, should have satisfied us of his design to blind and deceive us to our ruin. Had his books been moral, would we not have found that out for ourselves? And where was the necessity of lessons of morality where immorality had never yet been known? But the books were not moral. They taught us the most monstrous falsehoods. They described man himself as a most pernicious moral monster. They described society as a vast collection of knaves, fools, and ruffians—they taught suspicion, and cunning, and trick, as the true guides of human conduct, by showing the utter impossibility of getting on without them; and thus, painting man as a villain, they enforced the necessity of villany as matter of self-preservation. If ever men were prompted by the devil, it was certainly those same two, Johnson and Addison, whose books were among the most prominent of those left with us by the stranger. It was their insidious lessons and their false pictures of man and of society which had diseased and distracted our little community. We now doubted one another, and looked about us when one of us approached, as if we feared a cutpurse or a highwayman. Surely, these were not the lessons for the young. Should they be taught reserve, suspicion, distrust? Should the

generous waters of our nature be dammed up thus artificially? Should they not rather be taught open confidence and unhesitating frankness, since to be happy we must not only associate with, but learn freely to confide in, men? I will not argue—but, as I tell you, from the moment these books came among us, our happiness was all gone and our society broken up. There was no longer communion —there were now no sympathies for one another. There was no more pleasantry—no more play. Every thing had grown dull and distant. Young and old had books in hand, silent, studious, and getting wise. There they sat, and there they stood, on every side, conning the infernal pages of the tempter—until their shoulders grew bent and double, and their heads ached with thought, and their spirits grew discontent within them. Then they disputed about what they had read, until they quarrelled, and almost went to blows. These were indeed forborne, but sour looks and stern sarcasms were in abundance; and, for my part, I never yet could see the vast difference some people find between them. Give me the blow ten times, to the bitter and the bite once.

III.

"AND what," said I, a few days before he departed, to the stranger, whose books and presence had brought this condition of things upon us—"what can compensate us for this change in our feelings and our happiness? By what do you propose to satisfy us for those enjoyments of which you have for ever robbed us? Where is the equivalent? You must find something to bring us equally good with that which you deny us, and without its objections; or what is the use, and what the benefit, of change? You say you give us learning—you furnish us with knowledge beyond our standards, and you see what is come of it."

He replied to this in the commonplace cant, as I afterward discovered, of a monstrous large class of half-witted philanthropists and philosophers like himself.

"What! would you bar out learning? would you reject education? would you shut your door in the face of that unobtrusive wisdom, who craves but a single seat at your fireside?"

"A single seat, indeed," says I; "she takes up the whole habitation, and shuts out many other ap-

plicants, equally unobtrusive and far more agreeable than herself. If this be wisdom, truly, that makes all things sour, and drives away peace and cheerfulness—the two best household divinities I know—Heaven send her another habitation and a more devout society than mine. Let her go to those who like her best; or, at least, new-lesson her manners, and teach her a few rules of forbearance. I know," said I,—for my blood was up, and I could not help giving him a piece of my mind,—"I know that it is very fashionable among certain people to mistake learning, and frequently the knowledge of evil, for wisdom; but, in my thought, there is a marvellous difference between them, which your books are not the best calculated to reconcile. On the contrary, I am persuaded, from the facility with which Error may be circulated through their medium, that they will tend very much to perpetuate her existence, along with that of her ally, the false wisdom of Cunning, and its convenient and always ready attendant, whom you call Expediency. You have brought us learning—the knowledge, it may be, of many thousand things of which we were ignorant before. But where, let me ask, is the wisdom of our acquisition? Has it made us better? Has it made us happier? It

has not: and, having failed to do this, which is the chief aim of human wisdom, it has failed to make us wiser. When you came here first, we were all happy as the day was long, and I was the happiest of our people. You brought us books, and taught us to know, what before we had never dreamed of, that man was a common liar, a murderer, and a thief—that woman, who, with us, had always before been considered a handmaid of the heart, attending on generous confidence and unfaltering affection—that she was a capricious wanton, whom a paltry love of rule and a silly passion for display could seduce from the arms of the fondest love and the most relying devotion. They taught us, and you taught us, to know Error—Truth we had always known before. You taught us to doubt, to fear, to envy one another—to practise those obliquities of mind, and those infirmities of passion, which were written in your chronicles, and were the familiar attributes of the society from which you came—and this you call knowledge:—and these men, Johnson and Addison, whom you so much bepraise for their morals—out upon them for teaching, as they do in all their writings, that truth is a wandering beggar, exiled and houseless among men; and that the only way to keep our pockets

from being picked, and to maintain ourselves against assault and spoliation, is to employ, as spies and sentinels, those noble senses and that otherwise lofty intellect which the Great Father has assigned us for better purposes. You have robbed us of happiness, and our future chance for it, from the moment when you destroyed our confidence in one another. Wisdom, therefore, you have not brought us."

He strove to combat my opinions, and used a thousand arguments, none of which applied to our case, however they may have answered for a less primitive people. He went away at last, thank Heaven! though quite too late for the repose of our little community. He had left the seeds of evil thick sown behind him in those pernicious books. They had effectually driven away our repose and mine. Mine was irremediably gone the moment I discovered that Marian Clifford could prefer to mine the company of a book called "Rasselas," which she for ever had in hand. She no longer cared for my songs and stories. By degrees she grew bold to discuss philosophies of one sort or other, as if people who desire to be happy should have any thing to do with philosophy. Then she became careless in her dress, and left off

wearing flowers in her hair—though in her head they did look so beautiful. Then she began, every now and then, to rebuke me for my use of certain words, as she insisted, quite out of their legitimate import, and in a manner not authorized by Addison. Confound Addison, and the cold-hearted fiends that set him on. I was never my own man after that.

IV.

But this was not all. The evil did not rest here. The greatest blow was yet to come, and come it did. The stranger had not been gone much over six months, when another came, and brought with him a new supply of the pestilence—books of all sorts and sizes. It appears that he was sent by the previous traveller, who, it would seem, with that resolute malignity which leaves no stone unturned for the utter destruction of its victim, had made a large and liberal selection of all those writings which could the more effectually convince us of the misery of our once happy condition of ignorance. Nor was this all. There came one book especially to me, and my name—so they told me—was written in it. I can well conceive the fiendish

smile upon the lips of the remorseless and vindictive wretch as he wrote it there. It completed my unhappiness—for what should it be but a collection of my choicest songs, gathered orally, either from myself or among our people, by the hearer. There they were, and I could not but recognise song after song, as Marian Clifford read them out to me; but so mangled, so wretchedly perverted and altered from what they were when composed by me, that I grew furiously angry, and threw the book into the river. Where I had one word he had put another; and one song about Marian, and originally addressed to her, was so altered as to address one Sophonisba Melville. Sophonisba Melville! That drove me mad. And there, that song—my very best—was printed, and in circulation, away among the New-York people, and far away to Boston, as if it really had been written to Sophonisba Melville. But, as I live, I did not make it for any such person. I do not know any such person. It was made for Marian Clifford, and sung to her, alone, one evening—she must remember the time—a few days after the great hurricane, when the tree fell upon and threw down her father's cottage, nearly crushing the old man under it. She must recollect all the circumstances, just as I tell them,

and I am persuaded, though she has not treated me rightly of late, that she will do me the justice to confirm what I say.

V.

After this I could stand it no longer. I was bent to go to the great cities, to see and judge of people for myself; and, above all, to make the printer unprint all my songs. I set off one day, and though it was painful to me to part in that manner, yet I left the village without letting any one—not even excepting Marian—know of my intention. It was no very long time before I came to New-York. I looked about for the stranger, but could see nothing of him—yet I saw many persons very much like him. However, as I did not come to seek, I was not sorry that I could not find, him. My principal object was with the printers; so, inquiring the way, I was shown a large number of houses, in different places, in which I was told that they carried on their dreadful labours. Their places of abode were numerous, and their own name was Legion. No wonder Error travels so fast and far. No wonder Sin gets along so well in the world, when the infernals have so many agents

and emissaries so busily at work, day and night, in sending forth their abominations. My soul sickened within me—and my heart,—Oh! how it beat—when once I had fairly set foot within the gloomy and sooty walls of that great mansion-house of sin.

VI.

THERE was evidently no small degree of confusion within the establishment at the moment of my entrance. Several of the servitors of that sad supremacy hurried along by me into different apartments, with faces in which consternation was mingled up with malignity. What could be the matter? I hardly dared to think, yet how fervently did I hope, that the foul agency was about to receive some signal rebuke, if not overthrow, from Heaven. From an inner room, in which stood the office of the chief manager, whom they called "the editor," came forth many loud voices, and passionate ejaculations fell frequently upon my ears from the same quarter. I was compelled to wait, but not long; for, with a due increase of the clamour within, the door was thrown open wide, and out rushed a young gentleman of nearly my own

age. His hair was long and strangely dishevelled —his cheeks flushed with anger—his eyes starting from their sockets—his dress greatly disordered—and his words incoherent and furious. Could the demons—it was my first thought—have been practising upon him with their tortures? Not content with their insidious assaults upon the peace and happiness of man, were they to be permitted to proceed to personal violence? Was this to be borne? My blood was up with the thought, and I determined on the instant to stand by the young man to the last; particularly as I saw that he was pursued by a monstrous fellow, twice his size, who carried a great stick in his hand. I went between them, and my appearance had its effect, for both of them at once stopped short and looked upon me. The young man then, in whose behalf I had interposed, came forward, and begged me to hear him, and to say whether he had not been treated foully, and with the greatest injustice. I told him I could well believe his assurance, for that the purpose of my own visit to such a place was complaint.

"It is well," said he; "you shall see—you shall judge between us. You must know, then, sir, that since the first establishment of the 'TSHA-TSHE-TSHERANTSHAI—'"

"Chaw-che-cheranchai!—what's that?" said I, for I did not know what to make of his speech.

"Oh, that," said the editor, now speaking up for the first time, "that is the title of our periodical—decidedly the cheapest in the world—which, as far more significant and comprehensive than any thing in our own language, we have borrowed from the Japanese (yes—Japanese, I think it is): It means, 'The Sunflower, which not only perfumes, but illumines all creation.'"

The young man proceeded, with some impatience, after this interruption. "Well, sir—you must know, then, that from the first establishment of the 'Tsha-tshe-tsherantshai,' or 'Sunflower which perfumes and illumines creation,' I have been a constant contributor to its poetical department; and no one individual, I make bold to assert, speaking, at the same time, within the limits of a proper modesty, has done more than myself towards making that luminous periodical what it is. Yet, sir—you would hardly suppose it after this—see how they serve me. Look, sir—look at the mangled and miserable condition of these verses; and say, sir—say if there be not provocation enough here to drive any poet mad."

The young man then read me some of his verses,

pointing out, as he did so, the errors which the printer had made in their publication; and they were bad enough indeed—worse, infinitely, than many of the perversions which I had so bitterly complained of in my own. Some of these errors —if the subject were of such a nature as to permit of levity—were by no means unamusing. Thus, the word "hope," by the ill-advised substitution of one letter for another, had been made to read "rope," after the following fashion:—

> "And if thou frown'st, those eyes of thine
> Shall never more their triumph see,—
> One trembling rope (hope) shall yet be mine,
> And pride shall keep down agony."

Well might the poet complain—for, as he himself showed me, "hope," and not "rope," was written in the original. But, as the editor suggested, the agony of the writer at that moment having been so considerable as to affect his nerves, the "*h*" lacked the customary twist at the top and a figment of the turn at the bottom,—the printer was not, therefore, so malignant as unfortunate.

"Besides," added this latter personage, and, as it appeared to me, with no little malice in his manner—"besides, we are of opinion that *rope* reads far more justifiably than *hope*; and, we are free to

assert, gives a far more imposing turn to the verse. The point is now quite epigrammatic and affecting."

The poet seemed something silenced by this new view of the case, and, so far, half appeased; but the next verse worked him into a greater fury than ever.

"Well, sir, perhaps you are right there; but what do you say to this?" and he read:—

> "The patent (latent) pain, that, in my breast,
> Offends the scorn that's swelling there,
> Its deepest pang by ride (pride) repress'd,
> The grief I lose, to thee shall bear."

"Now, sir, what have you to say to this? I will take my oath I wrote 'latent,' and not 'patent' pain. Where's the copy? See for yourselves, gentlemen—there it is—nothing can be plainer than that manuscript—clear as copperplate. Look —'patent' pain indeed!—who ever heard of 'patent' pain? What is the meaning, sir, of 'patent' pain? Can anybody, with any pretensions to common sense, imagine the object of a writer in writing 'patent' pain?"

"Ay, to be sure we can," said the editor; "the object's plain enough; and, in a choice of the two words for significance, nobody but yourself would

venture to select 'latent' in preference to 'patent.' Why, sir, there's a volume of meaning in 'patent.' Don't you see, sir, that now there's no danger of its being counterfeited? Your pain, sir, is secure against imitators and counterfeiters of every description. There are damages to be had—exemplary damages, sir—against offenders of that kind, and the rogues know it. Why, sir, that word alone prevented us from taking out a copy-right for this number of the 'TSHA-TSHE-TSHERANTSHAI,' which, otherwise, the superior character of its contents would have compelled us to have done."

VII.

THIS diabolically sarcastic speech nearly completed the insanity of the poet, whom, with great difficulty, I persuaded to go with me as far as possible from the fiendish association in which I had found him. As we went on he read me his verses throughout, and they were full of similar perversions, which could only have grown out of the most monstrous and wanton malignity. Thus, the "*p*," in the second verse, was omitted from pride, leaving the reader to infer that, in mental as in bodily affliction, a four mile gallop, on a lean horse,

and with thin breeches, would be the readiest and most effectual remedy. One whole line, as if disliking the place originally assigned it, had thrust itself into that of its neighbour. The rules of grammar, in many cases, had been grossly perverted, while commas and consonants had been strown, thickly as red-peppers, over the performance. The good intentions of the author, in more than one instance, had become bad; sweet words, like milk kept without boiling through the long summer night, had turned sour—"vows" were changed into "cows"—"liar" was printed for "lyre"—"lover" was converted to "plover," the "*p*" having been taken from "pride," in a previous passage, it would seem, for this very purpose—not to speak of the "rope" for "hope"—the "patent" for "latent"—and an incomputable throng of equally wonderful transmutations, each of them quite sufficient for the utter annihilation of that innocentest of all God's creatures, a young man who is in love and writes execrable verses.

VIII.

I FELT too deeply the misfortunes of this much-abused youth to reflect much, at that moment, upon

the injuries I had myself sustained from the same quarter. My sympathy restored him, in great part, to composure; and I then found him so civil and sensible, that I told him my own story. He hardly knew what to think of it—but when he heard that I made songs, he broke out as if he was mad again, and repeated, one after another, nearly a dozen of his own. Then he asked to hear one of mine; so I obliged him by the recitation—for he would not let me sing it—of one I had made about Sally Gray, who lived down in Mississippi State, at the fork of the Yalo-Busha river.

SALLY GRAY.

I.

How know you Sally Gray, sir—
  How know you Sally Gray?
Oh, how, but by her gentleness,
  And sweet and smiling way?
A way that wins all hearts, sir,
  That none can well withstand;
That makes her name the name for all
  That's lovely in the land.

II.

There's few like Sally Gray, sir,
  None hereabouts, I know—
And very few, I'm bold to think,
  Wherever you may go, sir.
They boast their girls at New-Orleans—
  I've seen them all, and say
There's not in all that city, sir,
  A lass like Sally Gray.

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  A lass like Sally Gray.

III.

A farmer's child is Sally Gray,
Hard by the Walnut Hills,
Just where Big Loosa river runs,
And Yalo-Busha fills.
And if you want to see a lass
Worth looking on, I say,
Why, turn your horse's head at once
And travel down that way.

IV.

You will not need two glances, sir,
Before you do confess
Her beauty, and, what more we love,
Her woman gentleness.
She is the lass, for all the world,
That has the sweetest way;
And then her laugh—ah, stranger, go,
Go look at Sally Gray.

"And you call tnat poetry?" said he, with a manner the most sneering and contemptuous.

"To be sure I do," said I; "what else would you call it?"

"It is evident, my good friend," he replied, "that you know but little of the art of poetry."

"Art of poetry, indeed," said I. "Poetry is not an art. Poetry is an expression. You spoil it when you make an art of it, for it then becomes a mere matter of machinery. What would we think of a plan to cut the sunshine into squares, and deal it out to mankind by rule and compass?"

"My dear young friend," said he, "you have

much to learn; and my advice to you is, that you go back, with all possible expedition, to Kentucky, or whatever other barbarous region you may have come from, and there dig potatoes with your kindred. This is no world for you. To show you now that you know nothing of poetry, I will just indicate the manner in which I should have written those verses about your Sally Gray. In the first place, however, let me say to you that Sally Gray is no name for a heroine, unless of the burlesque. Such a name will do well enough for a fishwoman, but not for a lady. Who could love, who could tolerate, a creature having such a cognomen as Sally?"

"Well, but that is her name," said I.

"The more's the pity, and shows conclusively that, having such a name, she deserves no consideration from the poet, and is not a fitting subject for poetry. Persuade her, by all means, to change it as soon as possible. Change the Christian name certainly—the Gray may stand, as it falls readily into rhyme; but the Sally!—make it Rosa, or Matilda, or Norna, or Brenda, or Zobeidé, or Hinda, or Zuleika, or Medora, or—but there are thousands beside of proper names, which are common enough among the romancers. But listen now, and you

shall have a touch of genuine poetry on the same subject—a subject which, though remarkably bald, I am willing to employ, as it will enable me the more readily to show you how much true genius can make out of nothing. What's your first verse?"

I repeated it.

"Ah, well—that will do—now listen to my version of the same idea:—

I.

By what high charms, oh, noble knight,
By what high charms, I pray,
Know'st thou the maid who glads thy sight,
The fair Matilda Gray?
Up spoke that gallant warrior then,
And glory fill'd his eye—
"By charms that, 'mid a world of men,
Would lead me forth to die."

"What's your second verse, now?—Ah, that's enough—listen."

He continued:—

II.

I challenge, for her charms, the earth—
Search every sea and shore,
Matchless in beauty as in birth,
Is she whom I adore.
And he who boasts a brighter maid
Had better fly my path,
And perish 'neath his own base blade,
Than look upon my wrath.

III.

The lady of a high estate,
She dwells in lofty pride,
Where babbling waters idly prate,
On Hudson's shelvy side.
If blindness be a boon to thee—
If death thy heart prefers—
Go, let thine eyes a moment see
The glittering glance of hers.

IV.

Thou wilt not need to look again—
But in thy dying hour,
With quivering heart and burning brain,
Confess her matchless power.
Go, then—thou idle wanderer—go—
Behold her glance of pride—
If, smitten by a nameless wo,
Thy aim be suicide.

IX.

As he concluded these verses, which I could not help seeing were indeed very different from mine, he left me with a wave of the hand and toss of the head which I did not admire; and so bewildered was I, by one thing and another, that I entirely forgot to return his civilities. But one part of his counsel sunk deeply into my mind, and that very day I started off for my own old cottage on the banks of the Arkansas.

When I arrived there, which I did in good season, the condition of all things which met my sight

more than ever forced upon mė the thought of the demoniac origin and character of typography. Its sins were about me at every turn. Imagine for yourself a small community, dwelling upon the margin of an insulated lake or river, far away from the sea, and fenced in among the hollows of the rough hills by the thick forests. Imagine the felicity of such a community as I have described ours, invaded on a sudden by an influence which, in so short a period, could wean its members so dreadfully from one another. Could the Evil One have devised a better mode for making the innocent unhappy than by making them independent of each other, in this way defeating the natural tendency of man, which is to society? The machine for casting darts was said, by a savage warrior long before our time, to be the grave of valour; now books, to my mind, are the burial-places of thought, since they furnish opinions ready made to our hands, and thus prevent us from thinking for ourselves. Of old, when there were no books, men could not maintain opinions through successive generations—they could only transmit the incidents of their history and the exploits of their warriors; hence it is that a simple and uneducated man is most commonly the profoundest and cor-

rectest thinker; as that which he ventures to utter is that which he has tried, proved true, and tested by his own experience. Books preserve opinion, and as opinion perpetually changes its shape, and daily puts on new and contradictory forms, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that they must perpetuate error, and misrepresent continually, while they continue to defeat the purposes of Nature. This is the true reason of human discontent and misery. And what, in another point of view, must be the evil fruit of this tree of knowledge, in the abridgment of social enjoyment—in the diminution of converse between the sexes—in the general curtailment of popular sports, without which no people can be moral, and scarce any condition innocent—in the fettering of manners—in the inculcation of a habit of indifference to the claims of one another—in the habitual solitude—the sour melancholy—the eating sickness—the questioning and critical analysis of each other's language—and in the generation of that most grotesque monstrosity of all, a woman who chops logic, and presumes to be independent of her own petticoats. These evils are the evils springing out of books, and books only. Nor are these all. The dance ceases to go on under the old tree—the minstrel no longer gath-

ers around him the wondering circle made happy by his legends—we learn to neglect the ancient grandam, whose stories of an evening chained us to the fireside, and kept us from wandering away into forbidden places. Books are the substitute for all these—they make us wise, and they make us unhappy. They teach a thousand evil lessons. They instruct one to claim a higher seat than another—they beget pride, ambition, and a down-looking jealousy. They take from us our simplicity, and leave pretension in its place. Nor are the satanics who first brought them into exercise content even with this extended measure of human affliction. They bring with them a fearful and a subtle demon, whom they call Science. This is the coldest monster of them all, and is the same, I am perfectly persuaded, whom the Germans call Mephistophiles. He goes farther than all the rest, and the first lesson which he teaches us is, that our grandmothers were all liars—that they have taught us falsehood and folly—that what they told us of spirits walking beside us is not true—that the little green-coated fairies are not in the hillside hollows —that the sun is no journeyer by day, and, like a wearied traveller, does not lie down at night in the far forests to repose—that the rainbow is not the

sweet promise of mercy from the perpetual Sire—that the stars are not born with us, and have no control over our destinies—and, more than all, that the winds at dusk do not bring us sweet messages from the friends whom death has carried away into other countries. These fancies, forming a sweet faith, and taught us by our forefathers, this demon, whom they call Science, irreverently denies. He would teach us other things, more congenial with the cold malignity of that dark influence whose cruel agent he is. But though these new lessons have deceived and made wretched our people, they deceive not me! I will not hear to this demon—I will believe in our fathers, and I will not believe in these books. Ah, would that Marian Clifford were only of my way of thinking!

THE SPIRIT BRIDEGROOM.

"First gain the mountain; then, if thou wouldst see,
Look boldly; and the paths by which thou cam'st
Lie 'neath thee, like a thousand silver threads,
Clear in the sunlight. Wouldst thou farther yet,
Pierce with thine eye, and other realms behold,
The pathways of the future? Let thy heart
Be repossess'd of childhood—of its fears,
And thousand fancies. Infancy lies near
Heaven's sources, and the true humanity!"

THE

SPIRIT BRIDEGROOM.

I.

"At midnight, Anastasia," were the parting words of the lover, earnestly and impressively uttered.

"At midnight, dear Albert," was the reply.

"I live not till then!" said the youth, passionately;—"and if thou meet me not, Anastasia, I perish."

"Fear me not," was the response; "I will be there."

The leaves of the grove parted, and by the pale glimmer of twilight the two might be seen taking their farewell embrace;—she, a tall and slender maiden, lovely as light, and soft as the newborn zephyr; and he, manly and strong, yet youthful—having limbs of perfect symmetry, and a face full of beauty and expression. A fond, sweet kiss—a parting word and sigh—a longing and earnest glance—and the lovers separated.

II.

THEY had not been unseen, however. The eyes of jealousy were upon them, and the gloomy Count Wallenberg—a suiter for the hand of the maiden—had watched them throughout the interview.

"'At midnight!'" he exclaimed, as he saw the youth depart—

"'At midnight!' I will be there also;"—and he shook his hand threateningly as he spoke, and his brow assumed a cloudy expression, which accorded fitly with the terrible thoughts which were working in his mind, and with the foul feelings at his heart.

Count Wallenberg was a nobleman of high birth and gallant achievement—renowned for deeds of valour, and not less so for his great estate—his immense worldly possessions. He was remotely connected with the family of Anastasia Darlemont—its equal in all hereditary and honourable respects; and, though something of a cub in his manners, a coarse, rude, rough-handed nobleman, yet, as the terrors of his claws were calmed in gold, he was none the less acceptable to the family.

They liked him, all except Anastasia; and she, most probably, did not like him only because she liked another better. But her attachment to Albert of Holstein was unknown to her parents, and she well knew that it would be hopeless, if once revealed to them. She had chosen for herself, and her lover found no great difficulty in persuading her to the next step. At midnight she had consented to fly with him.

III.

ALBERT of Holstein was a student in one of the German universities of the time, the name of which is quite unnecessary to this narrative. He was, at the period of which we speak, just entering his eighteenth year. Until his sixteenth, he had been under the guardianship of a good, but weak and misjudging mother. While he was yet in infancy he had lost his father, who had fallen in a domestic feud with some rival baron, occasioned by a difference of opinion on some matter of great importance or of no importance, which had suggested itself to them for discussion while over their cups. The son—the only heir and promise of his princely name and dominions—but for a mind and temper

naturally excellent, would have been utterly ruined by the various and misconceived indulgences of his surviving parent. Nature, who is not often strong enough for so trying a toil, resisted the mother sufficiently long and well to save the son from utter ruination; and, when sixteen years of age, he was ready to go to college. After the usual preparation he was admitted into one of the leading universities, where he soon had occasion to test for himself the propriety of that course to which he had so imprudently been subjected. It is not our object, however, to analyze or dwell upon the impressions of his mind under the new changes of his condition—affecting, as they must have done, the whole structure of his early habits, and pruning and converting, as it were, the dead branches of excess into a new and fresh capacity of life. It is enough to say that he rapidly threw aside the follies of habit and of thought which the error of his mother had engendered. The resources of his own mind—a case not very common—enabled him to contend with successfully, and finally to counteract, the thousand mistakes of a foolishly fond parent, and a cringing crowd of domestic parasites.

In the city in which Albert pursued his studies

he made many acquaintance, and among them the family of Darlemont. To know Anastasia Darlemont was to love her. Albert loved her; and she —how could she withstand the persuasion of such lips and eyes, such warm language, and such a generous and lofty spirit, as Albert brought whenever he came to woo? She did not resist; and, as we have seen, she not only consented to become his bride, but she pledged herself to fly with him that very night.

IV.

The night came—a sweet night of many and bright stars—a night for secret, and sacred, and stolen love. But it was not a night for love alone. It was a night for hate also—for jealousy and murder. There was one who watched and waited as did Anastasia, but it was with no sweet and gentle feeling such as possessed her. With the darkness Count Wallenberg stole into the garden, and lurked in readiness for his victim and the hour. He was resolute to remove his rival at all hazards; for he had seen enough to feel that, though himself the accepted of her family, he could never hope for the affections of Anastasia while Albert lived. It

was the error of so coarse a wretch to imagine, that he would be more likely to win them when he had slain the youth. The maiden despised him; though, as he was approved by her parents, she dared not exhibit openly her scorn and disapprobation. She was compelled to submit seemingly, and in silence. It was to avoid so hated a union that she resolved to fly with her lover. The necessity of the case was her sufficient excuse. The sire had already denied his suit, and the language of his rejection had been one of contumely and reproach. There was then no alternative, and the lovers met and resolved in secret. But their secret was now known, and to their deadliest enemy. Wallenberg lurked in the garden walks, and prepared his bloody knife for the bosom of Albert. This sort of contest was characteristic of the time. The strong arm carried out the stern word, and justice was a thing of muscle and brutality then, as it is now, a matter of cunning and calculation.

Wallenberg lurked in the shadow of the groves, and the lover came at last. His heart was elated with its hope, and his footstep was that of joy. He hurried forward to the place assigned for their meeting—a close bower of sweet shrubs in the

centre of the garden. But the foe and the fate lay in his path, and he was not permitted to reach it.

"Villain!" cried Wallenberg, as he struck the steel into the lover's bosom—"thou shalt pay for thy presumption."

"Anastasia—Anastasia!" were the only words uttered by the victim as he fell lifeless at the feet of the assassin. Count Wallenberg stole away in silence when the deed was done—satisfied that he was now without a rival.

V.

How slowly did the hours pass to the maiden while she waited the coming of the youth. Why came he not? From the lattice she had looked long and anxiously, listening for the dear sounds of his whispering voice; and when the clock tolled forth the full hour of midnight, impatient to behold him, she stole silently down into the garden, treading its flowery walks, and seeking for him in vain. Her heart already began to fill with those mysterious fears and forebodings which are natural enough to a German maiden, and a deep groan at length seemed to confirm her apprehension, while it attracted her immediate regard. She hurried

forward in the direction whence the sound proceeded. She heard her name mournfully uttered, and, she fancied, from the lips of Albert. She soon reached the spot where he had fallen, and in a state of mind which bordered on insanity, she beheld the young and manly form of her lover stretched out lifelessly before her. She gave but one shriek, and fell, scarcely less lifeless than himself, upon his now cold and bleeding body.

VI.

She awakened only to hear a terrible voice above her.

"Take her home," cried her father. "Remove her to her chamber."

"Leave me—let me hold him to the last," she implored—

"He is not dead—he is warm—the life is yet beating at his heart."

"Home with her, I say," were the fierce words of her father; and she shuddered as she beheld the malignity and savage exultation which were written on his features. She then suspected him of the assassination—her own father—and her sorrow increased with the horrible thought. The true

assassin remained unknown. Inquiry, in a little time, having laboured unsatisfactorily, was entirely suspended; and if suspicion at any moment rested anywhere, the object was one quite too high for the arm of public justice.

Meanwhile the body of Albert was removed to his former lodgings, and from thence to the family vault, in the country. But a strange report came to the ears of Anastasia. It was soon whispered that Albert still lived—that a skilful physician and careful hand had kept the spark of life in his bosom, and that there were yet hopes of his recovery. This report brought hopes to her—faint hopes, but sweet. They kept her mind in a state of feverish anxiety, and prolonged, if they did not increase, the sickness at her heart.

VII.

But little time was allowed her, however, for idle meditations upon fancies such as these. Count Wallenberg pressed his suit, and would not be denied In vain did she plead for time—for a brief indulgence. His suit was urged; and, at that early period, fathers gave themselves but little concern about the tastes and wishes of their children.

They decreed her to the great bear, her wealthy lover. They doomed her to the sacrifice, and the day was appointed for placing the victim before the altar. We may not speak the anguish of Anastasia on being instructed to prepare for the nuptials with Wallenberg. She felt that it would be far easier to die. But, hopeless of any aid from without, and having no succour or show of mercy from within, she prepared to resign herself without struggling to the fate which now seemed inevitable.

VIII.

A FEW weeks had now elapsed since the death of her lover, when this scarcely less dreadful doom was pronounced. She fled to her chamber in loneliness and desperation. It was midnight. She threw herself down before her window, and wished and prayed for death. The very associations of memory, so full of pleasure and joy as the reality had been, now brought her infinite pain. They told her what she had enjoyed, but they also told her what she had lost, and lost for ever. She felt that it would be sweet then to lapse away into forgetfulness, and, fleeing from the pressure and the care of life, rejoin her departed lover in the dwellings of the blessed.

Why does she start—why tremble? Her very heart is cold. What does she hear?—what see?

Well may she start—well may she tremble. The faint tones of music which now seek her ears are such as she had been long accustomed to hear from the lips of Albert. The words are his words, and she cannot mistake the tones. They breathe the same passion—they utter the same language. In all respects they are the same, and Albert must be at hand. She lingered and listened breathlessly to hear the sounds. They died away at last in the distance, and the wind then sighed mournfully around her. Her bosom felt chill, and her terrors becoming insupportable at length, she was compelled to seek the innermost recesses of her chamber, and bury her head, and strive to bury her thought, in the thick drapery of the couch, which she now gathered up around her.

IX.

But the fascination of the music was too powerful for her mind to resist, and she braved all the terrors which her imagination described in the hope again to hear it. With the return of the next midnight she again sought the lattice, and lis-

tened impatiently for its returning strains. They came at last to her senses. The same sweet, mysterious air rose swelling upon the night wind, and was, borne, as it were, directly to the window where she sat. The tones were full of the warmest melancholy—faint, but full—strange, but sweet—mysterious and vague, but as familiar as if they had all been learned in childhood. She was no longer terrified; and, obeying an impulse which she now found irresistible, and having no fears, she gently undid the lattice, and looked out with far-searching eyes among the trees of the garden. Nor did she look in vain. She beheld a form retreating away among the thick crowding trees, so nearly resembling that of her departed lover, that she involuntarily uttered his name. She was answered by a sigh—so mournful, so deep, that it seemed to reproach her for the indifference of her grief—for her consenting to the bridal sacrifice which had been decreed by her father. Her sorrows burst forth afresh with this thought, and she was convulsed by her emotions. She lost all guidance of her reason in that moment, and called upon Albert deliriously.

Had her voice indeed so much power? Had the deity spoken from her lips, and was it in truth

her lover who now stood before her? Fair and manly as when at first she had beheld him, she beheld him now. He looked even lovelier and nobler than ever. No trace of his hurts was perceptible. He was alive, and utterly uninjured. She grew faint as she surveyed him. She trembled with a feeling of awe, lest at that moment she should be standing in the presence of a spectre. His eyes, though clear and intelligent as ever, were sad, and full of a solemn expression. They looked the divinity of wo—such an expression as might belong to a fallen and defeated deity. A mingled feeling of love and adoration, which she strove vainly to restrain, filled and inflamed her heart. How gentle were all his tones—how soothing his words—how tender their utterance. How sweetly did he assure her of his existence—of his continued love for her, even while that existence was doubtful. He had been in deep extremity from his wounds—on the verge of dissolution, from which he had been saved only by the marvellous skill of his physician. The moment of his recovery brought him once more to the feet of her without whom the skill which had saved him would have been rejected. He had risked all danger once more to see her—to hear from her lips that

she was not lost to him yet—that she would be none other than his. How easy to give that assurance,—how sweet to receive it. Long did they linger in the sacred and silent garden, in fond communion, with no watcher but the stars, and no thought but of that true and blessing love which they seemed to smile upon and sanction.

X.

The difficulty of escape from the approaching bridal with Wallenberg distracted the maiden, in the midst of all her newborn hopes and pleasures. She had poured into her lover's bosom all the sorrows which had troubled hers. His composure satisfied and reassured her.

"Fear nothing," he said, "I shall not lose you. I will save you from this hated bridal. You shall be mine, Anastasia, mine only, believe me."

"I do—I do," she repeated, fervently.

"Be ready, then, as I shall counsel you, and fear nothing."

He gave her directions for meeting him, made his own preparations for flight, and with mutual impatience they waited the approaching and appointed evening.

It came—the hour which had been designated for the marriage of Wallenberg. The chapel of Darlemont Castle was pompously illuminated—the company were already assembling in crowds, and every thing was gay comparison, amusing scandal, and good-humoured clamour. There were aunts and uncles, cousins and friends—the whole world of various and motley elements which such an occasion so commonly brings together. At the head of a long train of connexions and dependants came the bridegroom, as full of his own consequence as of impatience for the ceremony. The hour was drawing nigh for the sacrifice—but a voice, under the lattice of Anastasia, said to her in a whisper, which, though soft, yet reached her ears—

"Come—come to me, beloved—I await thee, Anastasia!"

A mournful but a sweet voice was his—a voice of melody and love,—and she answered it, in like language—"I come."

She stole away by a private passage into the garden. She joined her lover, and they fled from the boundaries of her father's domain, long before the assembled company had dreamed of her absence.

XI.

"WHERE is she?—where is Anastasia, my bride?—why comes she not?" was the demand of Wallenberg.

Where was she, indeed? The hour had elapsed—the moment was past—why came she not, in glittering robes, heading, in kindred gladness, the garlanded group of damsels that had gathered to wait upon her? The castle was soon in commotion, and a strange anxiety filled every countenance. The bridal chamber was empty—the maiden was not to be found. The castle was searched from turret-top to donjon, but in vain. They were compelled to seek her elsewhere. They hunted through grounds and gardens, dispersing everywhere, but without success. They next sought the forests. As they penetrated the thick woods, the sky suddenly became dark and overcast—vivid flashes of lightning added to, while illuminating and making perceptible, the gloom. A storm of frightful energy passed over the wood, prostrating every thing before it, and subsiding with equal suddenness. The sky became instantly clear, and the moon shone forth in purity, unconscious of a

cloud. The firmament had not a speck. The bewildered groups proceeded in their search. A soft and gentle strain of melody seemed to imbody itself with the winds. They followed the sounds into a dark and gloomy enclosure of high overarching trees, thickly fenced in with knotted vines and brushwood. The thunderbolt had been there, and it was scorched and blackened. They advanced—the music still leading them onward—until, in a small recess, they found indubitable tokens of the maiden, in the half-consumed remnants of her hat and shawl. They now beheld her destiny. They saw that she had been spirited away by the fiend. She had become the victim of the demon. He had triumphed in the garb of the early and lost lover—and she had fallen a victim, in a moment of sad credulity, to the arts of a designing and an evil angel. They continued the pursuit no longer. She was lost to them for ever.

XII.

"Oh, save me, Albert—what a dreadful storm!" was the pleading and terrified address of the maiden to her lover, as they hurried away from the tempest which raged after them through the forest.

"I will—fear not, dearest—there is no danger."

"It pursues us," she cried, with increasing terror.

"It will not harm us—it will soon be over," was his assurance.

A stream of ground lightning, like a wave of the sea, rushed up the hill at that moment, and followed close upon their footsteps. The maiden darted forward in desperation—Albert seized her in his arms, and throwing aside her hat and shawl, which encumbered him, he bore her away like an infant. He bore her to the edge of the forest, and laid her down upon the greensward in safety.

XIII.

When she recovered from the faintness which had overcome her, the storm had passed away—the night was beautifully clear. The moon had risen, and the gray forests looked sweet and hallowed in her light. A gentle strain of music rose upon the distant breeze, and still more contributed to the soft loveliness and languor of the scene.

The bright eyes of Albert looked down into the dewy orbs of Anastasia, and she thought she never before had seen them look so beautiful. His arm

supported her, and she fancied its pressure had never been so fond before. She was blest in that embrace—and fear, and sorrow, and fatigue, departed in the consciousness that she then felt of having all that she lived for, and all that before had been denied her love.

"We must proceed, my Anastasia—our dwelling is not far—we can reach it by the dawn. Our steeds are now in waiting."

While the moon was yet shining, they stood upon the rocky cliffs which overhung a beautiful river. A proud and lonely castle stood in sight upon the highest crag. The stream glided below it with a pleasant freshness, and rippling away among the shelving rocks, in the placid moonlight, it seemed to the eyes of the happy Anastasia a home of faery—a very heaven for the heart of truest love.

XIV.

The bird sings falsely who sings only of sunshine. The song must sometimes speak of clouds. Happy were the two—happy in the last degree—in their mutual loves and constant intercourse. Albert was all that Anastasia could desire in a

lover—he was fond—he was gentle. His language was kind, always—and his very whispers were musical. But he was melancholy—he was always sad—even when he was most happy. He seemed never to forget the mutability of happiness. Yet his sadness was never gloom, nor did he at any time complain. Still, the very fact that he asked for no sympathy, and that she knew not how to address herself for his relief—these still made her unhappy. There was yet another cause of disquiet to the fond Anastasia. Their dwelling was so lonesome. True, Albert seldom left her, and there were a thousand pleasant amusements which he had provided; but her heart was too human for such a solitude; and the very winds that mourned in music through the rocky crevices, and the gentle river that rippled sweetly at the castle's base, and the sweet birds that carolled in the groves, and the stars that sang together harmoniously in their courses, all seemed to tell her of the many bright eyes, and cheerful hearts and voices, with which she had been accustomed to mingle. These thoughts gave her some occasional annoyances, but a sweet word from Albert consoled her.

"For a time, dearest, we must keep in solitude,

to avoid the search which your father will doubtlessly institute after you. We must keep in secret—we must avoid all exposure—and here they will not be very apt to seek us."

She was satisfied—she seemed to be satisfied, at least—and that was something.

XV.

One night they walked along the edge of the precipice, and looked abroad upon the night and river. The stars were shining in profusion, and not a breath murmured but harmoniously.

"Tell me," he said to her, in a sad but gentle tone, "tell me, Anastasia—do you not tire of our love, and the solitude to which it dooms you?"

"Not of our love, oh, no! dearest Albert, but sometimes I feel so lonesome."

"Yet are you not alone—am I not with you always? With you, dearest, I have no such feeling. You are all to me, Anastasia, and I feel no want when you are absent. Ah! feel like me, I implore you, my beloved. When you repine about your solitude, I mourn—I am unhappy."

"Be not unhappy, Albert—I will repine no longer. I feel that you are all to me, and where-

fore should I repine for any change that may lose me all?"

"Wherefore!" he replied—seizing her wrist with a strong gripe as he pronounced the word after her, with a singular energy. "Wherefore! indeed? Repine not, dearest, or you may indeed lose all!"

"What mean you, Albert?" she demanded, with some apprehension.

"Look!" he exclaimed; and she beheld, even as he pointed, where a bright star shot away from its sphere in erratic flight, bearing along with it a momentary train of glory, which, as it belonged to, and came from, the sphere alone, was soon extinguished upon leaving it.

"Look," he cried, "look at that star! Be not weary of thy place of watch and quiet, lest thou become extinguished also. Thy sphere and temple are in one heart—thou canst not inhabit many."

He paused, and his eye seemed to trace afar upon its flight the pathway of the vanished star. She looked at him with anxious apprehension. His eye seemed rapt in sorrowful contemplation, and though he shed no tear, the expression was that of a sublime and subdued sadness. She threw her arm tenderly around his neck, and she felt that a thrilling shudder went all through his frame.

"It grows cold—let us return, my beloved," she said to him, fondly.

"Leave me but a while, Anastasia—I will come to thee soon. Leave me now."

His words were gently toned, but she felt that they were rather a command than a solicitation. She left him at his bidding; but ere she went she threw her arms again about his neck, and sweet and pure was the kiss given by their mingling lips. She went towards the castle; but, looking backward as she went, it seemed to her that she saw a bright and beautiful star moving across the river to the crag whereon he stood. At length she beheld it remain stationary beside him, and the distinct outline of his person was developed by its rays. She turned away with a strange terror—she dared not look again; but hurried onward with trembling steps to her chamber in the castle.

XVI.

It was late that night before Albert came to the chamber, and yet she had not slept. A strange, sweet strain of music, wild, yet fine, came to her ears at midnight, and soon after she heard it he appeared.

His looks were sad as when she left him—and he did not seem pleased to find her watchful.

"Thou hast not slept, Anastasia?"

"No—I waited for thee, Albert. I can hope for no sleep when thou art absent."

"But sometimes I would have thee sleep, simply because I am absent. Ah, my beloved, would that I might sleep, and sleep for ever, when I can no longer be with thee."

"That music—that sweet music, Albert—whence did it come?"

"Wilt thou not sleep now, my beloved?—I am with thee," was the evasive reply; and Anastasia understood the gentle form of chiding which he had adopted. She obeyed the suggestion—she tried to sleep, and did sleep, but her slumbers were greatly broken—she knew not why; and whenever she awakened it was to hear whispering voices and sudden gusts of music, that seemed to be passing around the apartment with a rush of wings.

XVII.

It was yet early morning when Anastasia awakened and beheld Albert just about to leave the chamber. She called to him, but he only

smiled, shook his head, waved his hand gently, and hurried from her sight. She rose quickly from the couch, and moved to the window, from which she beheld him hastening down the rocks. He looked back and caught her eye, and his finger was raised as if in warning. The thought of the shooting star came that moment to her mind, and she hurried back to her couch.

He returned about mid-day, and seemed unhappy. He started frequently, and looked around him, as if in anxious expectation of the approach of some desired person.

"You are troubled, Albert," said Anastasia. "Can I do any thing for you?"

"Yes!" was the sudden and almost stern reply. "See not that I am troubled. When thou canst serve or sooth me, I will seek thee—when I do not seek thee, Anastasia, believe me, thou canst not serve me. Seem then not to see that I suffer."

"And thou dost suffer, Albert?"

"I live!" was the terrible response; and Oh! the immortal grief that looked forth in that moment from his eyes.

"Would that I could die for thee, Albert!" was her exclamation, as she flung herself upon his

bosom. He folded her fondly in his embrace, while he replied to her as follows:—

"Thou canst better serve me than by dying for me, Anastasia—and far better serve thyself. Live for me."

"Do I not, dear Albert?"

"No—not yet—thou dost not live for thyself."

She looked up wonderingly at the speaker—he proceeded, and his voice was full of solemnity, and there was an intense earnestness in his face which she did not dare a second time to look upon.

"Love thy condition for itself. Seek not to see, and ask not to partake of, mine. Is there any thing unknown to thee?—it is better for thee that thou shouldst not know it. Has it come to thee in a dream that a joy was in the valley awaiting thee, beyond any ever known to thee before?—turn thy footsteps with a fond solicitude from the path which leads to the valley. The dream was a lying one, sent for thy insnaring. Thou wilt lose what thou hast, in grasping at what thou hast not, and the very hope which tells thee of a blessing to come, steals a blessing from thee while it does so. Beware, Anastasia, that thy head misleads not thy heart, and thy fancy consumes not thy feelings. Do we not love each other, Anastasia?—Couldst

thou have a fonder or a truer love than mine? Let it suffice thee—joy in what thou hast—pray to thy God, Anastasia; pray that, if thou dost not yet, thou mayst soon learn to love thy condition as thyself—it is more than thyself to thee."

He kissed her, and left her with these mysterious lessons, over which she pondered in doubt and sadness.

XVIII.

The advice of Albert was good, but how unreasonable. How is it possible for man, unless denied to hope, to be content with his condition? How much less possible for woman! To be content with existing things is to desire no change—to hope for nothing better—to live without a thought of heaven. The requisition of Albert sank deep into the mind of Anastasia, but not to produce the effect which he desired. It came to her as a restraint, and not a direction—as a controller, and not a guide. Was he to suffer, and was she to be denied to share with him in his griefs, to console him under their torments? Love itself rose in rebellion against such a requisition. And when she beheld his sadness visibly increase

with each successive hour, her fond heart—her sleepless affections—could no longer remain pacified and silent.

"Albert, dear Albert, you do me injustice. I am strong to share with you—ay, to endure all your afflictions. I feel that I love you too well not to rejoice in pain when I know that every added sting to my heart takes from that which is preying upon yours. Unfold to me your griefs—say what afflicts you. Let me hear the worst, and you will see how I can smile to place my hand with yours in the flame, and, looking into your eyes of love the while, feel and fear none of its searching fires."

It was thus she implored him for his secret—her arms twining about his neck in the fondest embrace—her dark, sweet eyes, looking with the warmest devotion at the same instant into his own.

"You know not what you ask," was his reply. "You ask for wo—for eternal wo—for a doom for which you were never destined. Why, oh! why will you be dissatisfied? Have you not my love—all my love—my heart, truly and entirely yours? The love of the unselfish and unexacting man—of one who is above meanness or its reproach—is

the richest possession ever yet given to the woman heart. Wherefore would you seek for more ?"

"You do not give me your heart—you will not give me its sorrows. It is for these I ask."

"You have them, Anastasia—it is only the name you desire to know. You have them already."

"How ?"

"Your present care—your anxiety to know them—is your sorrow now. You see that I am grieved—and you grieve to see it. That is enough for me, and should be enough for you. You give me your sympathy when you grieve at my suffering. You prove to me your love for me when you wish to see me glad. I am satisfied with thus much in the way of proof—be you satisfied, dearest Anastasia, with the degree of confidence I have already shown you. Seek not to hear more. I, who know how much you can console, and how greatly you ought of right to suffer with me, deny you any farther knowledge of my griefs than this. I would not have you even see so much. But, at least, I desire that you should seek to know no more."

XIX.

Compelled to be silent, she yet remained unsatisfied. A feverish curiosity was gnawing at her heart. What could be the matter with Albert? Were they not secure in their retreat?—was he impatient so soon of the pleasant fetters which love and her fond arms had woven around him? She conjectured, vainly, of a thousand causes for his suffering, dismissing, as idle, each suggestion of her mind, as soon as it presented itself. Her thoughts were sleepless, and they kept her so. That night she heard strange noises in her chamber—strange though slight. She had resolved to keep awake, and yet, even while she strove, it seemed as if a blessed breeze came about her, in a murmuring whisper, that glided into song at length, and filled the air with a slumberous power. She felt the sleep wrapping her still resisting limbs as with a garment of melody, and though she strove to burst its fetters, and her eyes persisted occasionally in looking forth, they were at length compelled to yield the struggle. Yet, ere they closed entirely, it appeared to her as if a red and lovely light, pointed and raying out like a golden star, wavered

and flickered around the couch where she slept, fondly clasped in the arms of Albert. It was not quite dawn when she awakened from that sleep, and then it seemed as if she had been awakened by a cold and sudden wind, which passed over her face while yet in a state of dim and doubtful consciousness; she felt the form of Albert, which before had lain quietly beside her, suddenly convulsed as if with spasms; and when she turned to him and met the glance of his eyes, they were wild beyond description. They glanced sadly, and almost with an expression of gloom upon her, and she felt as if he had repulsed her. But when, under the agony of that thought, she threw her arms around his neck, he returned her embrace with a fondness that answered fully, if it did not exceed, her own.

XX.

All that day he was absent among the neighbouring rocks and woods. She had asked to go forth with him, but he had resolutely, though gently, denied her. Her thoughts, during his absence, were all given, in spite of her will, to the one absorbing subject—the mystery of his sorrows. By a strange instinct, her mind continually reverted

to the image of that star, that seemed to cross the river, and station itself close beside him where he stood. A next and natural transition of her thought reviewed the singular sensations which she had experienced just when sinking into slumber, and when awakening the previous night and morning; and she now remembered, among other circumstances which had attended her sleep, that it had followed soon after the kind kiss which Albert had impressed upon her eyes. The more she meditated this matter, the more perfectly was she convinced that the kiss of Albert had produced that obliviousness which she was so very desirous to avoid; and, as she was resolute, in spite of all his counsels, to discover what she could of the occasion of his sorrows, she determined, if possible, to escape the repetition of that kiss upon her eyelids when, at a future time, she desired that her eyes might be kept open. It is not difficult for a woman to effect her object when she aims to do wrong; and it will be seen that Anastasia was only too successful in repressing sleep when her husband desired to impose it on her.

That very night she determined to try her experiments; and accordingly, as a first step, she aimed to set Albert's mind perfectly at rest as to

the degree of quiet which was in hers. When he returned to the castle, which he did at early evening, she received him with the fondest and most satisfying smiles. Her good-humour and cheerfulness, easy but not obtrusive, delighted him, and she now saw the truth of what he had told her. He was happy as he saw her happy, and his sadness passed away, leaving not the trace of a cloud upon his brow, as to his eye she appeared content with her condition. Joyfully—ay, with an intoxication of joy—he clasped her to his bosom, and his words were never fonder, and his kisses never half so sweet. She half resolved, if the appearance of contentment on her part could produce such a vast improvement on his, to make it her study to obey him. Alas! why have we not always the strength to obey good impulses only!

"Be ever thus, my Anastasia—be ever thus, and we are most happy. You will then see no sorrow on my brow, and I will secure you against all that might otherwise assail your heart."

"I will pray Heaven to be as you wish me, Albert. I have little else to pray for."

She retired for the night, and he promised to follow her very soon. When she had gone, he clasped his hands, and his eyes looked up in hope

to the blessed starlight that came shining through the grated window of the castle. He spoke in low tones of soliloquy as he looked up to the wheeling and flickering fires.

"Let her but continue thus, and I am safe. There will then be no more wanderings—no more flight—no more incertitude. I shall resume my station—I shall ever more burn with the fixed fires that the winds move not—that the capricious seasons check not—beyond the control of the mortal, beyond the power and caprice of the immortal. Yes, dearest Anastasia, in thy constancy—in thy content—in thy love of thy condition, clamouring for no change-begetting knowledge, I shall be secure, and we shall both be happy."

It was not long after this that he retired to the chamber of his bride.

XXI.

She had played her part to admiration—she had completely deceived her husband. She little dreamed of the evils which spring from all deception—even where the end seems to be most innocent, and where a superficial thought esteems it praiseworthy. She wished to know his griefs—

she persuaded herself because she could then the better administer to and heal them. This was her duty; and so regarding it, she entirely forgot that obedience, in the inferior mind, is a duty also. Albert was perfectly convinced that Anastasia was dissatisfied no longer. That conviction brought back his cheerfulness. His was a peculiar destiny; and to be thought happy by her, and to make her satisfied with his lot, by perfect happiness in hers, was, according to the terms of that destiny, the condition of his own happiness. Believing and confiding, with renewed and increased fondness, he leaned over her, as she seemed to sleep, and sweet and long was the fond kiss which he pressed upon her parted lips.

She did not sleep—she was watchful. With a pertinacity that did not suffer fatigue or pause, she kept resolutely awake until midnight. Remembering the kiss upon her eyelids which her husband had usually given her, and to which she attributed the deep slumber which always seemed to have followed it, she contrived so to dispose her arms as to throw one of them effectually over her eyes, and thus to prevent the possibility of his lips pressing upon them. She found the position an unpleasant and tiresome one after a little while;

but, bent upon her design, she determined to suffer the annoyance rather than forego her purpose. When a woman once sets her mind upon any thing, it is no small matter which is to divert her from it.

Midnight came at last, to her great satisfaction. She heard the clock of the castle toll forth the hour with a solemn emphasis, and she could scarcely restrain the deep sigh of her heart from forcing its way to a corresponding sound to her lips. But she did restrain herself, and in a moment after she distinctly felt a cold wind rush through the apartment. At that moment Albert half rose in the couch and bent over her. She felt his breathing distinctly lift the lighter curls of her hair, and with a close ear he listened to her respirations. He tried with a gentle finger to detach her arm from its close place over her eyes; but the arm seemed all at once to have become most obstinately rigid, and he failed in his efforts, in which he did not persevere for fear of awaking her. As if satisfied that she slept, he seemed to turn away; and the arm, so obstinately immoveable before, was now slightly lifted, without being removed from her eyes, and only sufficiently to enable her to give a single glance around the apartment. As she had seen before, she now distinctly beheld a shadowy out-

line at the foot of the couch, in whose massive brow a bright pale star shone fixedly and soft. A moment more had elapsed when the form of Albert became suddenly convulsed, and she could scarcely forbear the fond impulse which prompted her to forget every precaution, and clasp him in her arms; but the secret stirred in her mind at that moment, and she maintained her position and silence, though several convulsions, each successive one more severe than the preceding, shook his form as with so many dreadful spasms. They were scarcely over when a cold breath of air seemed to pass above her neck, and she distinctly felt the body of Albert sink down helplessly beside her. Her heart beat impetuously—she could scarce suppress her breathing, and nothing but the most resolute determination enabled her to forbear shrieking aloud. She did forbear, however; and once more venturing to look forth, she now distinctly beheld two shadowy forms glide through the apartment, with each a red and similar star shining brightly upon his forehead.

XXII.

ANASTASIA could bear this no longer, particularly when, turning to the side of the couch where Albert lay, his body was cold, corpse-like, and immoveable. Conviction forced itself upon her—the secret was discovered, and the burden was insupportable. She shrieked aloud in her agony; she clasped the lifeless body in her arms, while her eyes, addressing the star-fronted shadows that stood at the foot of the bed, seemed to appeal to them once more for the restoration of the inanimate form beside her. With the first accents of that wild and fearful shriek, indicating, as it did, the sudden and startling intelligence which her mind had received, a visible effect was produced upon the strange aspects before her. While she looked, she beheld one of the stars rise slowly, and sail away without obstruction through the spacious windows, while the other wavered and flickered about as if in the gusts of an uprising storm. A storm, indeed, seemed to rage through the apartment. The shadowy figure appeared to expand into a rolling and tossing cloud, in the midst of which, as if it were the centre of its action, the

bright star now grew more bright, and of a deeper red, and shot forth the most angry fires on every side. Nothing could exceed the terrors of Anastasia. The star seemed now to approach her, and gust after gust, like the rushing of so many heavy wings, passed and repassed over the couch where she lay, lifting and rending its silken drapery. She cried aloud once more in her apprehension.

"Forgive, forgive me, dearest Albert—forgive me that I have offended. Come to me—be as thou wert—I will obey thee—I will never offend thee more."

"Too late—too late," cried a voice of sorrow rather than of anger from the bosom of the cloud, which now hung, like a dense wreath of vapour, just above the couch where she lay.

"It is too late, dearest Anastasia—I can return to thee no more."

"Wherefore—wherefore?" was the interrogation of the terrified woman.

"It is the doom!" was the hollow answer from the cloud; and the star that still shone from the vague form before her seemed to shed drops of blood, that fell even upon the garments of her couch, as the mournful voice thus responded to her inquiry.

"Alas! alas! wherefore is this doom?" she cried once more to the shadow and the star.

"Thou hast already asked too much. I warned thee, my Anastasia. Was it not enough to know that thou wert happy? Why wast thou not satisfied with thy condition? Thou hast destroyed the hope and the happiness of both by thy impatient thirst after the why and the wherefore."

"Alas! and for this are we to be disunited, my Albert—for so slight a cause as this are we to lose the blessing we have lived for?"

He replied to her in an allegory.

"Does the flower please thee?—wherefore destroy it to know whence come the scent and the beauty? The odour flies when thou dost so—and the beauty fades. This is life—this always the happiness of the mortal. But thou art mortal no longer, my Anastasia—thou art now destined to share, even as thou desiredst it, the terrible doom which is mine!"

"What meanest thou, Albert?" she inquired, tremblingly, as these fearful words reached her ears.

"Albert no longer," cried the star. "Thy lover was a god!"

She sank from the couch where she had lain as

she heard these words, and she now lay extended along the floor.

"Rise, Anastasia, still beloved, though mine no longer—rise," said the star, "and I will tell thee what is given to thee to know."

She rose—she stood tremblingly in the presence of that fiery eye that looked down upon her, while the cloud in which it was imbedded hung over her like a protecting and mighty shield. How glorious, how fearful, were the words which followed.

XXIII.

"When I bade thee regard the flight from heaven of a lovely star but a few nights ago, Anastasia, I called thee to witness my own fate. That star was a kindred light with mine, seduced by me, as I had been seduced, from the sweet and beautiful abode where it shone, happy and adored, on high. I had my abode beside it, and was the worshipped deity of a mighty nation. No eye brighter than mine looked forth from the Eastern summits—no more pure or peaceful planet gave light to the returning shepherds. Like the star whose flight I pointed out to thy regard, I fell from my place of glory, and the secret of my fall was in the

commission of thy error. I was discontented with my condition."

The spirit-lover paused, and the hapless Anastasia wrung her hands in hopeless misery. He proceeded—

"For ages, before the birth of Time, had that lovely abiding-place been the assigned station from which I shone. Millions of lovely spirits shone and revolved around me, with a light partly borrowed from mine; but oh! how unapproachably inferior to me. I was beloved—I was worshipped; but, like thee, Anastasia, I knew not to be content in my place, and incurred, in a hapless moment, a doom not unlike, but far more terrible than thine."

The maiden moaned upon the floor of the apartment, but without the utterance of a single word. At that moment a pale star sailed along by the window, and from the dim cloud, of which it was the centre, she heard a voice crying mournfully—

"Come!"

Albert replied with a promise of compliance, and the spectre-glory floated away in the distance from her sight. He proceeded in his narration.

"One night—one fatal night—looking down from my place of watch, I beheld, in undisturbed quiet and loveliness, the various and the wondrous worlds

around me. A pale form passed hurriedly along upon one planet, the earth, and it waved its hands, and it shrieked in agony, and its cries of sorrow came to my ears, even afar off as was my dwelling. Thine was that form, Anastasia—thou wert the mourner."

"Alas! alas!" cried the hapless woman—but she could exclaim nothing farther.

"Thine was the form, and such was the agony of thy piercing shriek, that inly I mourned for thee—I deemed it a cruel injustice that such as thou shouldst suffer. Thou wert so lovely and so sorrowful, and the sweetest loves in the thoughts of the blessed are those which are allied to sadness."

With these words the spirit paused in his narration, and the cloud in which the eye hung and shone now veered away and approached one of the windows of the apartment. At the same time, many stars, floating in like forms, came before the window, and strange words passed between Albert and the rest, in tones of the most sweet, but subdued and melancholy music. In a few moments they floated away like the last, and her companion again approached and hung above her in the apartment. He continued his narration:—

"With the thought and the desire which came

to me as I surveyed thee, Anastasia, a dim and giant form came rushing towards me, from the piled clouds that lay like so many rocks and towers in the northern horizon. His speed was like that of the lightning; and he made his way among the stars around me, obscuring their lustre, and scorning their obstruction, with the rapid rush of a mighty tempest. When he approached me he lay suspended on his outstretched wings, the curtain of which clouded the earth and concealed it that moment from my sight, and he gazed upon me with an eye of sorrowful pride, mixed with the most mortifying expression of contempt. 'I have heard thy wish,' he cried—'thou canst dare to regret, but not to repair. Thou canst see, but thou hast not the courage to share the suffering which thou seest. Truly, thou art a generous spirit—noble in the estimation of the highest, and worthy of the fixed place which thou holdest.' Such were his words of scorn, and they touched my pride. 'And what better fortune is thine, dark spirit?' I replied to the intruder. 'What hast thou to boast beyond me—in what is thy better portion?' He answered readily, and his voice went through me with a strange and mighty power, so that I trembled in the sphere in which I had never before been shaken.

"'I am free,' was his fierce and proud reply. 'I am free.'

"I heard his words with a throbbing and speechless admiration, and began to feel a fond desire that I too might be free. I little knew then the nature of the blessing which I sought. I little thought that, to be free, I should for ever after be alone!

"But I was not yet free, and I replied to him still as the appointed servant of my master: 'My state is glorious—my home is one of lights, and love, and perpetual flowers; and my duty is only to watch for the Mighty One.' He replied in greater scorn—

"'Thy home is one of lights—true—but they are spies which are set upon thee to report when thou errest—the love which is given thee is not given for thyself, but for thy service—and the flowers of which thou art mad to boast—look, fool, they are woven into chains. Thou art a slave but to spy upon others—thou art spied upon thyself, and held worthy of love only as thou dost the appointed task of the menial.'

"He had spoken to me a dreadful truth—so I deemed it at the time, and in my thoughts I wished myself free—free like the fierce and mighty form that lay prone like a fearless giant, proud and scornful

in his might, before my eyes. I wished for freedom, and with the wish I felt the golden link melt away that secured me in my station—the bands of flowers, which like a chain had held me with a spell which no foreign power or agency could have broken, now, at my single wish, were relaxed from about me, and a mighty and clear voice from a world a thousand worlds above me, came to me like the sudden sound of a trumpet—

"'Thou art free!'"

XXIV.

"Dreadful freedom! That instant I felt myself alone. I was detached from the sphere in which I had borne so small a labour, and enjoyed such a high and worshipped glory, and I floated away into a thousand regions, and journeyed with the mighty spectre which had seduced me to his sorrows and my own shame. But ere I had utterly left the sphere in which I had dwelt so happily and so long, I heard the sad lament of my companion stars, stronger, yet more humble in station than myself, whom I had left behind me. It was a strain which told me my destiny, and shaped out my only future hope, as it detailed my own duty to myself and to the mighty master.

CHORUS OF THE STAR-BRETHREN.*

I.

"'Wo to us and to thee,
Star most beloved—
Thy world and ours
Tumbles, and falls abroad—
Thou, in thy weakness,
Brother, most erring!
Thou, in thy loneliness,
Thou hast destroy'd it!

II.

"'They bear away—
They the dark spirits
Whose pleasure is ruin!—
They bear away
The hope and the harmony
Wreck'd into nothingness!
While we weep over
The beauty that's lost!

III.

"'Mighty among the stars,
Bright one, rebuild it!
In thy own bosom
Rebuild it again!
Begin a new being
With spirit unshaken,
Then shall new music
Unite the now sunder'd!'"

XXV.

"SUCH was the mournful anthem which my brethren sang in sorrow at my departure and fall,

* Imitated from a chorus of spirits in the "Faust" of Goethe.

and whose strains followed me afar, and still follow me. I hear them now; and thou too, dearest Anastasia, with whom I had commenced that new being, and through whose beloved agency I had hoped for my restoration, with thee beside me, partaking my immortality and glory in that high place—thou too mayst hear it now."

And she did hear, for a gust of the breeze, that seemed full of perfume, floated that moment by the window, and her ears distinctly noted the last words of the melancholy and imploring anthem:—

"Mighty among the stars,
Bright one rebuild it!
In thy own bosom
Rebuild it again!
Begin a new being
With spirit unshaken,
Then shall new music
Unite the now sunder'd!"

"I had commenced that new being with thee, my Anastasia, and hoped to have succeeded in my labours; but the very danger which I feared, and against which I strove to counsel thee, has wrecked the fond hope within my bosom, and now drives me forth once more, alone, to commence my toils anew. Thou wast not content with thy condition or with mine—thou hast committed mine own error."

"And is there no forgiveness, Albert?—let me but be tried once more, my beloved—"

"Thou shalt be tried, Anastasia—this is thy doom no, less than mine. Thou hast striven to know—it is now thy destiny—thou art now doomed to partake of mine."

"Ah! happy—happy shall I be, Albert, if so permitted."

"Alas! Anastasia, thou knowest not what it is—thou canst not dream of its terrors," was the mournful answer of the spirit to the fond assurances of the devoted woman. "Thou deemest that, to share my destiny, thou wilt still remain with me."

"And will it not be so, my Albert?"

"Alas! no!" was the sad reply. "It is my doom of loneliness which thou art to share—my doom of isolation. Thou wilt not go with me, nor I with thee, yet we must both go forth. Thou hast to seek, as well as myself, for that condition among the mortal which is borne without repining and with no desire of change. Make thyself kindred to such a spirit, and thou livest with me when I rejoin the stars."

She lay shrieking at the foot of the cloud, which now slowly descended and seemed to encircle her.

"Come!" exclaimed a sober and sad, yet soft accent, at the window; and there, in her sight, floated once more the kindred star which had followed her lover; she felt herself lifted from the ground, and enveloped in a fold of the softest and the sweetest air, while the bright eye of Albert, starlike and pure, came close to her forehead.

"What wouldst thou?" demanded Anastasia, in her bewilderment.

"Impress upon thee my immortality with my doom," was the answer; and that moment she felt the star pressing like ice upon her forehead. It seemed to sink, cold and chilling, into her very brain, and she shrieked with the momentary agony of that feeling. In another instant she was released from his embrace, and, whirling round with a motion not her own, she now found herself wrapped in an airy mantle like that of her companion, and she was conscious while floating away—away into the fathomless abysses of the air—that she shone from the centre of a cloud like the star which had personified her lover. Her next feeling was that of utter isolation. She beheld the beautiful star, which she had loved as a mortal, sailing along, with a slow and steady light, above the rocks and the river, and she strove to follow and rejoin it.

But a power restrained her movements and checked her will, and she now felt herself borne unresistingly in an opposite direction. Then, for the first time, did she feel the horrible nature of that destiny which she had so passionately desired to share with him. The fearful truth which he had uttered came like a knell of agony to her suffering soul, as she felt and feared, in that desolate moment, that she was destined for ever after to remain alone!

A PASSAGE OF ARMS IN '76.

"This is hot work—the whizzing ball goes free,
Making wide havoc. We are in for it,
And have no choice but to strike lustily,
Lest the blood thicken."

A

PASSAGE OF ARMS IN '76.

I.

HAPPENING at the city of Charleston, in South Carolina, some few years ago, I took advantage of the first pleasant summer afternoon to pay a visit to Sullivan's Island, the site of one of the earliest and best-fought battles of our revolution. I stepped, at the proper hour, on board the little steamer plying between the city and the island, amid a large assemblage of *élégantes* and *négligées*, infants and invalids. Some were in search of fresh air, some health, some pleasure and relief from business, and not a few for Point House* punch and billiards. My object differed something from these, as these severally from each other; but, though differing thus, all of us seemed most harmoniously to agree in the desire of escape from the suffocating heats of the city; and a general

* A place of resort on the island.

feeling of good-nature came over the party as the ringing of the last bell prefaced our hurried departure from the wharf. At the moment of our starting, a like movement by the rival boat from the wharf below us promised a handsome race, as the boats went off evenly together. The interest excited by such a contest, the fresh breeze winding freely around us as we rushed fairly into the beautiful bay that swells boldly and broadly before the city, together with the general picturesque grouped out to the eye noteful of prospects, in the various scenery of that fine harbour, gave a lively charm to the scene, that relieved the invalid, and aroused the indolent and indifferent into an emotion very like that of pleasure. We rapidly passed, in succession, the vessels at their moorings, the packets on their flight, the rival steamer, Castle Pinckney, with its brick walls, shelvy beach, and dismounted cannon, and in thirty-five minutes were at the island cove, without finding our voyage of some five miles and a half, either very long or very tedious.

I strolled with the more youthful and sportive of our fellow-passengers up to the house, at the inner point of the island, and facing the city, called the Point House; and,

"As was my custom of an afternoon,"

called for my "pint o' purl," which, together with a fine green cabanna, I discussed with a very fair amount of self-satisfaction. The house, however, rapidly becoming filled with the living and laughing cargo of both steamers, and as I detest a squeeze where more than two are concerned,

"——— I shook
From out my pocket's avaricious nook
Some certain coins of silver,"

with which,

Thanks to the immortal bard, from whom I quote,
For helping me thus far,—"I paid my shot,"

and proceeded at once upon my pilgrimage.

II.

"WANT a hack, mossa?" cried the obsequious negro, standing, reins and hat in hand, bowing before me.

"To be sure, Jehu," I replied, jumping in at the word.

"No Jehu, mossa,—da Tom, but I knows jist as well how for drive as Jehu, and I think someting better. You truss Tom, mossa—he's de one for de gemplemans."

"Well, well, Tom or Jehu, all the same—drive

away—go ahead," and, at the word, we followed the direction given by the dozen like vehicles before us, and skirted over the hard and extensive beach, decidedly the finest I had ever seen, from which the tide was rapidly retiring. This is a magnificent drive, and yields at the same moment a pleasing view of the city in the distance; the sea, which spreads out in mighty volume before you; and the scattering, but lively village, about which you wind.

III.

It may be advisable, though perhaps not altogether necessary, to inform the reader that the modern is by no means the ancient Fort Moultrie, so famous in our revolutionary annals for the fine defence which it made, even before our declaration of independence, against the British fleet under Sir Peter Parker. We know it in history as a rude structure of palmetto logs, the growth of the island, and all that it can produce, mortised clumsily together in squares, and filled in and up with sand. This is not the case with the structure nowadays. All that it retains of the olden time is the name, and, of course, the ever-glorious memory of which nothing can deprive it. The palmettoes are all

gone from the fort, and nearly from the island, having been found a lucrative source of trade, and having given way to a rage for building summer dwellings in that salubrious region of retreat. The modern battlements are composed chiefly of brick, presenting a somewhat imposing, and, at the present day, a rather martial appearance, having recently undergone large and striking improvements. The garrison, however, is small, and scarcely more than adequate to a salute upon the national holyday. There is little more about the works at present to strike the spectator, and, but for the ever-grateful association which they must still maintain in the mind of the American, along with the thousand altar-places of liberty in our country, they might for ever have been unknown and untrodden by me. But under that hallowing and inspiring influence, having first discharged Jehu and his hack, I sat myself down upon one of the old twenty-four-pounders that looked grimly from the battlements, and yielded myself to the thousand far-searching fancies that grew with the situation. One thought after another came crowding upon me, and I lingered, stretched at length upon the engine of war, looking up from sea to sky, on both of which the rich and mellowing hues of an evening southern

sun were spread out lavishly and light, like the almost living garments of heavenly looms. Below me, scattered here and there along the beach, strolled the various crowds, late my fellow-passengers, employed in the endeavour to make the most of the brief interval of time allotted them between the arrival and the departure of the steamers. Gradually, however, as the light began to grow more delicate and faint, and therefore more surpassingly beautiful, in the western heavens; and as the airs of evening came more freshly, and spoke in louder tones of muttering from the booming waters, their numbers grew less; and finally, but here and there could the straggling wayfarer be perceived, darkening with the shadow of a giant the white and tapering shore of sand, that spread, far as the eye could reach, in the distance beyond me. These few, also, disappeared in a little while, and I was left alone to those musings which bring more added satisfaction when enjoyed in the most perfect solitude. The scene, of which I now seemed to be the sole partaker, was certainly of that character, which, if not interrupted in its influence, will never fail to win the heart and all its thoughts to a highly refined and touching, but still pleasing, melancholy. All things contributed to this

end: the far city, like a broken cloud in the distance, gilded softly by the last smiles of the sun; the unceasing, low, and monotonous beatings of the sea, spread out before me in the undefinable and dim vista, like our ideas of eternity; the soothing softness and gentle murmurings, in its most mysterious tones, of the evening breeze, gathering itself up from the bosom of the waters—not forgetting the high and inspiriting associations afforded by the genius of the place,—all combined to infuse into my mind, naturally given to such wanderings, a dreamy kind of insensibility, which at length wrought within me a total forgetfulness of my whereabouts, and lifted me into those regions of romance, so inspiring at all past periods of time, but so foreign to the matter-of-fact of ours.

IV.

Gradually the whole scene underwent a change before my view—so gradually, indeed, that, until the transition was complete in all its parts, I remained perfectly unconscious of its going on. Strange lights were around me—strange noises in my ears, and faces glancing to and fro within my sight, to which I had been hitherto entirely unfamiliar.

The fort itself seemed to have been changed. In place of the level plat of folding and long grass which had so gratified my eye, as it received my form, capping the regularly and scientifically built battlements, I saw little more than huge masses of sand. The twenty-four-pounder, too, upon which, won by its pacific appearance, I had seated myself erewhile, now appeared to have put on an aspect the most antique and ferocious. The works around gave no token of a very extended degree of civilization in the art of war; and presented, on the contrary, the appearance of just such an enclosure as one would expect to see raised in the forest by the pioneer for temporary protection from the onslaught of the Indian. All was heavy, unelaborate, and unscientific. The great body of the fort was composed of palmetto-trees, the tops stricken off, and the trunks roughly hewn and dovetailed at their extremities one into the other, forming a series of squares of some ten or twelve feet or more, the spaces between being filled up with sand, either in huge sacks, or shovelled in loosely. There was something foreign—exclusively foreign—in the flag itself, which surmounted the incongruous fortification. There were no stars, no stripes, no eagles, but a simple banneret with a blue ground, having

a silver crescent in one corner. Centrally, however, the word "Liberty" appeared worked upon it, neatly, as if done by the hands of a fair lady. The interior of the fort presented a prospect fully as picturesque as this. Forming a triangle, three palmetto-trees, still in verdure, waved their pliant umbrella tops above four rows of white tents, from which, at intervals, and without any order, issued numerous small bodies of militia-men, in various guises, half military, half civil. Some of them wore caps of the most fantastic fashion, domestic evidently, and made of fox and 'coon skins. Others again, aspiring to something more uniform in their equipment, had on head-dresses of the glazed leather now familiarly known, on which the word "liberty" was printed in huge yellow capitals. Groups of officers, here and there upon the battlements, gazed intently through telescopes at some distant objects upon the sea, to whose appearance and approximation we were evidently indebted for all the excitement and commotion afoot. Martial music rang out cheerily, at intervals, along the old battlements, infusing a sentiment of life and animation into all around, of the increasing influence of which I felt my own spirit momentarily partaking.

As yet, however, I could not exactly realize the nature of my situation, or of the things about me. I knew none of the faces which I then beheld—they had an ancient, if not a foreign air; and their dress, in comparison with my own, was of the most antique fashion. Unwittingly, however, though I could comprehend nothing of the true meaning of the scene, I found myself engaged, along with others, in the performance of its duties. With this discovery I also began to make acquaintances. Some I soon became as intimate with as if I had known them a thousand years; and while I felt, all at once, perfectly at home, I knew so little of the matter I was engaged in, that I could not avoid making a comparison of my own pursuit with that of the soldier, to whom all causes were the same so that he got the fighting; who frequently changed sides during the heat of an engagement; was returned as found by the one, and missing by the other.

But I had no reason for ignorance long. An increased clang of martial instruments hurried our preparations; and standing at a gun, with hundreds of others, the whole truth seemed to burst all at once upon my understanding.

There came, in fearless pomp, a well-appointed

armament. Ship after ship—a strong array—armed with storm and thunder. It was the red cross of old England that came on to the assault—it was the slender phalanx of Carolina, then a colony, that prepared to contend with her. I felt—I saw—the whole mystery in a moment, as by some familiar instinct; and awe, delight, a wild, sweet anxiety, all struggled confusedly in my bosom. I felt the inspiration of battle—the rapture of the strife—and saw in the faces around me the same expression of enthusiasm which I felt glowing in my own bosom.

There was one stern, strong man, that had us in command. That was Moultrie. There was no child's play in his features, though, except when roused, they wore a decidedly apathetic expression. His face was broad, large, and good-natured—his forehead high and comprehensive—his lips compressed with the concentrated energies of a character strikingly distinguished for its firmness. He came and spoke to us, and but few words. But they were words of might—of a man. We cheered him as he spoke, without knowing it; and he went from group to group, and from gun to gun, and there was no flinching spirit after he had spoken. As the danger grew more evident

and unavoidable, anticipation found increased expansion and activity—as night on the approach of day puts on her darker and more imperial aspect. Our magazine was now thrown open—our arms were put in readiness—our flag run up on the heights.

V.

MARSHALLED with others, I took my place about the rude embrasure, through which we thrust a well-shotted English eighteen-pounder, not doubting that, like ourselves, it would have no unwillingness to do duty against its former proprietors—and, indeed, to do it all possible justice, throughout the whole of the contest, from beginning to end, it exhibited not the slightest symptom of reluctance. And now we stood—and this was the moment of fear and anxiety—awaiting the awful signal. It is not often that men grow impatient at the approach of the enemy, and yet, I feel, such was our enthusiasm, that there were but few, if any, among us, who—however conscious as we all were that the time was big with events, not only of moment, but for which we were almost entirely unprepared—yet felt any apprehension of

its consequences, or any great desire to get away from them. We were not suffered to remain long in suspense. We had no long time for consultation with our fears. On came the foe, in a regular line, to the struggle. First, leading the van, rushed the Active, of twenty-eight guns, keeping her way till within four hundred yards of our little fortress, when, anchoring with springs on her cables, she gave us a broadside, which went clean over us. Following the same course came the flag-ship Bristol, of fifty guns, under the command of Sir Peter Parker himself—then the Experiment, also of fifty guns—the Solebay, the Siren, the Acteon, each of twenty-eight guns—the Sphinx, the Friendship, each of twenty-six—the Thunder-bomb, and a host of supernumeraries:—a formidable armament, to be sure, and one well calculated to provoke misgivings in the minds of all those having the highest possible opinion of British valour and a British fleet, and themselves wholly unaccustomed to war. But when we involuntarily bent our eyes to the spot where lay the fair and lovely city, rising, almost like another Venice, from the bosom of the sea—when we saw the crowd of friends and fellow-citizens—the thousands covering its battlements—temporarily constructed like our own

—watching anxiously the manner of our performance—when, too, under the influence of an imagination ever obedient to the excited sense, and assuming, on such an occasion, the powers of a winged spirit—we could perceive the emotions of their souls in visible array upon their faces—could imagine the hope, the fear, and that worst agony of all, the dreadful suspense, which gave to these antagonist elements the full sway of the heart for their warfare—painting visibly their deep interest in our fight:—there was no shrinking then among us. Our struggle was literally for them—I do not believe we thought of ourselves at that moment. How long they were to remain untried and unemployed, was problematical; but, according to the most currently received opinions of British prowess, the conflict of our palmetto fortress was held only preparatory to the mightier issue of the main; and with a hope, which was yet as much a doubt as a hope, that we should be able to do something towards taking the sting from the invader, we braced our souls to the strife, and looked fearlessly forth upon our enemy.

VI.

LET us survey the conflict. Let us witness the young giant in his morning throw. Let us see if he bears himself manfully, as becomes the cause for which he encounters such visible odds. The ships of the enemy advance in heavy array to the battle, like so many storm-bringing clouds;—yet how beautiful is their approach! They glide forward with all the calmness that might be supposed to spring from a perfect consciousness of certain victory. Playfully the blue waters break away from before their prows—softly the zephyr blows—brightly the sun shines from the heavens. How sweet—how silent—how awfully serene is the prospect. Can they come for the purposes of strife? Where are the ensigns of battle?—where is the fury?—where the storm—the thunder? Yet the very silentness of their approach indicates their object. Though calm and winning their gallant bearing—though the waters and the sky are unruffled—terror, muffled up in clouds, rides threateningly in the distance. Yet, where is their enemy, and with whom would they contend? What foe stands forth for the conflict?

—what ensign floats royally in the air?—what trumpet speaks the defiance of a rival, confident in prowess, and well known in the slaughter-field of nations? There was none. Free, to all appearance, from any opposition, did the fleet of old England advance to the attack upon her refractory colony. The eagle had not yet spread forth her wings among the stars; and the banner of Carolina, in her first field, was a simple strip of blue cloth, bearing a silver crescent. This little ensign waved silently over the palmetto battlements, humbly proportionate to itself. Few were the hearts, and anxiously did they beat, within that enclosure; but they were firm and fearless, and gallantly devoted to the danger. They too are silent—they show nothing in indication of the approaching conflict—no bugle calls to arms—no knightly challenge is heard. Death is the bearer of his own summons, and he comes in silence to his banquet. God of the battle-storm, how beautiful art thou!

VII.

It was at this moment of repose that my attention was called to one of my comrades, whose name was M'Daniel. I turned at his salutation,

and could not help being struck with the contradictory expression of a countenance scarcely yet marked with the imposing lines of manhood. His appearance was indeed remarkably boyish, even for his years, which were few; and his face was full of blood, and softly and attractively rounded. Still, his person was of the most manly structure—he was sturdy, broad-chested, and athletic. As he spoke there was a degree of tremulous sadness in the tone of his voice, prevailing above the studied gayety of his address. I saw, too, that there was a dewy suffusion upon his long eyelashes, which was somewhat at variance with what might be looked for in the countenance of a soldier at such a moment. His object in addressing me was a curiously melancholy one. It was to make one of those contracts not unfrequently entered into by soldiers upon the eve of an engagement, when a presentiment of death warns them to a testament of their last wishes and effects. In the trade of blood, such contracts are of frequent occurrence, and add another to the thousand testimonies against a profession, deriving its character and importance entirely from the miseries of humanity.

"I shall fall," said he, mournfully. "I know it. I have had my warning, and there's no use to argue

with me upon the matter. I am as perfectly convinced that I shall perish in this day's fight as if I had seen it written upon the heavens."

"And what is the warning you have had—what shape did it assume; and from what testimonies would you infer its authority thus to prepare you?"

"You would laugh, perhaps, were I to undertake to array them to your mind, because, to the common thought, all evidence not conclusive and substantial would necessarily be rejected. But I am disposed to believe that there is a higher connexion between the worlds of humanity and spirits than we are generally willing to desire or acknowledge. I am satisfied, too, that the soul sometimes asserts its freedom long before its escape from the clay, and taking, in anticipation, the wings to which it shall shortly lay claim, arrives at the conviction of the truth in advance of its own presence. Perhaps this is now my case; for, beyond the irresistible mental conviction, and one or two positive, but, as you will say, trifling circumstances, I have no other reason for the strong faith that is within me."

"And what are these other circumstances?"

He took his watch from his fob, and pointing to the shattered crystal, replied—

"As I left my quarters this morning, I took this

watch, the gift of my father, from my pocket, simply to ascertain the hour. As I looked upon it, a shadow overspread my vision—a sudden dizziness, as it were,—and when objects became again distinct, as in, a moment after, they did, I found the glass shattered, without stroke or blow, in the manner in which it now appears to you. This you will, of course, hold a trifle. It may be so, but it has its influence upon me, and leads me to the belief that it is ominous of my approaching fate. If I fall, therefore, which I myself doubt not, carry my farewell to my poor mother, and give her this little bag, which contains a small sum of money. Though small, it will nevertheless be an item of some importance to her. The watch you will yourself wear, in return for another favour, which, after death, I shall need at your hands. Have me taken to the city for burial, if that be possible. I would not like to be thrust rudely into these sand-hills, burrowed after by birds, or laid bare by tempests."

I found all argument in vain; and, indeed, we had not time for much, if any. I received his little deposite at last, and he seemed satisfied with my promise, if I lived, to do what he desired. Our colloquy was discontinued, as we were now called to

the performance of our several duties. We were both stationed at the same gun, and many were the glances which I cast upon his countenance, but it had now nothing of fear or apprehension in it. The enthusiasm of strife had removed all trace of gloom from his features. The settled determination of true courage alone was there to be seen, in the contracted brow, the compressed lip, the distended nostril.

VIII.

THE signal is at last given—the suspense is over—the action is begun, and one wild interminable terror shakes the late peaceful waters. The iron rattles upon our tottering fabric, whose voice is scarce heard in reply. It is almost silenced, for, such is our poverty, that an adequate quantity of powder had not been, and could not be, provided, without too greatly diminishing that which had been allotted to the defence of the city. A stern old officer came to us in the wildest of the confusion.

"How now," he exclaimed; "you use up powder as if it were punch; have you no more respect for the enemy than to give them so much powder and

so little ball? Your discharges are quite too frequent—it will not do. You must shoot more truly and more slowly;" and carefully adjusting our cannon before its discharge, he sighted it himself, and watched its effect, as it unerringly drove the ball through the thick ribs of the huge vessel riding before us.

"That will do," said he, as he left us, to proceed in like manner to each cannonier along the battlements. Who would have known the stern, quiet, apathetic Moultrie, in the easy, the almost playful alacrity of the veteran to whom we owed this counsel and example?

IX.

We now regulated the piece by turns—M'Daniel and myself. It was for my comrade to perform this office. He bent himself along the gun, slightly varied its range, and, as he drew his form up to its height, our whole fort reeled beneath a general broadside from the entire fleet of the enemy. Our gun, undischarged, rushed back from the embrasure, throwing me, with several others, upon the rugged platform some feet below us. A sudden cry of dismay ran like fire along the line.

"The flag is shot away—it is down—all is over."

I bent my eyes instinctively to the merlin on which it had rested. It was indeed gone. I felt—I know not how. I was mad—like the wild boar stung by the serpent; for the loud huzzas of the British could be distinctly heard, as they witnessed what they considered our acknowledgment of defeat. On a sudden, however, the flag was again elevated, and waving in the sight of all. A slight dark form was beheld, amid the hottest fire, binding it upon the staff with the silk handkerchief which had enveloped his neck. All knew him by that handkerchief, which, from its peculiarity, had heretofore identified him. It was Jasper—the daring Sergeant Jasper. He succeeded. The flag was firmly knotted to the staff, and he descended in safety, amid a thousand huzzas, after an exposure of several seconds to the most dangerous fire. The shouts were vociferous along our line of fortress. A faint voice, after all other voices had ceased, repeated the "huzza" like a dying echo at my side. I shuddered unconsciously as I heard it, and turning, beheld my comrade almost torn to pieces. "Huzza!" once more exclaimed the dy-

ing man—"huzza!—I am dying, but don't let the cause of liberty die with me!"*

X.

THE words ran through my veins like electricity. I shouted them aloud—and in a moment, "Liberty! liberty or death!" rang terrifically along our battlements. Every voice repeated it; and in that moment of the most savage terror, I felt that we all realized the "rapture of the strife"—an enjoyment not peculiar to the Goth. Every gun was discharged with the shout, and with an effect the most fearful and decided. The vessel of the commodore was almost lifted from the water; her stays were shot away, and she swung round, with her bowsprit directly upon the guns of the fort. A voice went up from the line—all heard it, yet none knew whence it came.

"Look to the commodore, my boys—remember M'Daniel."

Every gun that could be made to bear upon this fated ship attested the warm recognition given to the direction, and three successive discharges went through her before she could be righted. She was

* Historical.

raked fore and aft. Her quarter-deck was cleared of every officer but Sir Peter Parker himself, and he fell severely wounded. She was bored in every direction by our bullets, and the blood ran smoking in thick streams from her scuppers, and bubbling upon the white and boiling waters around her. Vainly does the gallant chief, bleeding, and almost alone, call upon his followers for the honour of old England. The courage of desperation is in his eye—he cheers, fights, soothes, and imprecates, but in vain. They will hear, they will obey him no longer—dead or dying around him, even the name of old England—the thoughts of former glory—the recollections of their homes—will arouse them no more. God of battle, how terrible art thou!

XI.

THE cloud is gone from above the fearful scene. Can it be true? Have the warriors of Britain deserted the combat, shorn of glory and victory by such young adventurers in the race of fame? Look again! The sight is grateful to freedom. What fitter offering for her shrine than the blood of the oppressor—what incense more grateful than the burning fleets of invasion. They sank before us

as the prairie grass before the fire—they took no laurels on that consuming field. The sling of the shepherd had overthrown the gladiator of war!

XII.

SELDOM, O! Victory, hath thy bird of triumph settled down upon the banners of the just. Thou hast followed, with ungenerous spirit, in the wake of empire and aggression. Thy beak hath been whetted upon the hearts of the free, and thy talons are yet dripping with the life-blood of freedom. Thou hadst no wing for liberty. Thou hast carried no weapon for the avenging of human wrong. Thou hast been the ally of bold Tyranny and consuming Carnage, and thou hast drunken of human suffering as of an ocean, until the old world has been peopled with the widow and the orphan. Well is it for man and for humanity, that, in the New, thou art endeavouring to retrace thy path and redeem the errors of the Old. There is now a better hope for the nations, since, long obedient to the dictates of usurpation, thou hast deserted him at last. Thou hast given, in this, a new guarantee of life and liberty to man, and a new pledge of a more elevated and a more lasting glory to the nations!

XIII.

"THEY have fled—they are gone!" I shouted aloud, triumphantly.

"Ay, ay, sir, both the 'Charleston' and 'Macon' have gone three hours ago, and you'll not find a packet now on any terms," was the somewhat unceremonious, and certainly unlooked-for, speech of a tall fellow in the United States uniform, who suddenly stood at my feet. I rubbed my eyes, and as I gazed upon the broad sheet of water before me, on which the moon had spread a thin and beautiful garment of fretted silver, I saw through the whole mystery.

"Sir!" I exclaimed, half stupid and scarcely well awake, arising from the grassy mound upon which I had lain.

"Ay, sir, the boats have all left you full three hours ago. You will have to sleep on the island to-night, though, to be reasonable, your nap has been something long already. You seemed to enjoy it so well that I could not find it in my heart to wake you."

"Too polite by half," was my involuntary exclamation, as I set off, stiff in limb, and no longer valiant in spirit, to look out lodgings for the rest of the night.

THE PLANK;

A STORY OF THE SEA.

" This is a mystery of the deep sea,
Of the green waters—of the wondrous caves,
The shells, the sea-maids, and the battling waves,
And stirring dangers,—of the fearful things,
Monstrous and wild, that in their secret springs,
Course in pursuit of prey ; and all night long
Keep wakeful but to hear the tempest's song,
And join in terrible chorus. Would you hear ?
It is a singular story for your ear—
For he that made it hath the wizard's power,
To call up images that shriek and lower,
From hidden worlds, and graves, and wilds afar—
His mighty art commands them, and they are."

THE PLANK.

I.

It was on a pleasant day in the middle of September that I received a grateful intimation from the captain of the Three Cherubs of his intention to sail immediately. My passage in that smart little vessel, for a distant port, had been engaged a week or ten days before. We had been nearly that time delayed on account of wind and weather; and, though still loath, as is natural enough to young travellers, to leave home for the first time in our lives, yet, on the present occasion, the hurrying call of our captain had something in it of a pleasurable relief. There is no bore in the world to the young worse than that of delay when they are ready for a movement, and our impatience at waiting had been such as would have readily reconciled us to a longer voyage, and a more protracted absence from home, than any of us at that time contemplated. The anxiety to be away prompted instant obedience to

the requisition of our captain, and but little time was required to complete my preparations. In the course of two hours I was on board, bag and baggage, and an hour had not elapsed before the little swallow-like packet was under weigh, with outspread wings, and rapidly flying from land. All things seemed auspicious—the skies were clear, blue, and beautiful. No shadowing speck lurked like an angry danger on the edge of the horizon; and hope promised us a pleasant voyage, and a speedy return to the anxious friends whose hands and handkerchiefs still waved their adieus; and with fond eyes we still watched the crowded wharves of our native city, now fast melting away in the distance. We were soon far from land, and nothing but the broad ocean, and the curtaining sky, and our own thoughts and feelings, was left us for consolation and survey.

II.

THERE were three of us. We were not only young, but young travellers. Neither of us had seen more than twenty years,—neither of us had ever been before to sea. It was equally a marvel and a mystery to all; and our common inexperi-

ence had the effect of bringing us together in a more close communion. We were soon conscious of our mutual dependance, and felt accordingly the necessity of good-humour on all hands. This understood, we prepared, each of us, to do the best for the common good and gratification. Thus resolved, it was not difficult to make our little world tolerably comfortable. The sea exacted its dues, and the first day passed slowly, but without our consciousness of any thing but the penalties we were called upon to pay. The next day we were all better, and resolute to make the most of our narrow limits. Every voyager for the first time will readily imagine our employments. We rambled here, there, and everywhere, from the cabin to the caboose; tried to make ourselves familiar with sea-dogs and sea-terms—made the acquaintance of the cook, and listened to one or two long yarns from that important person. In this way we got through a couple of days with tolerable satisfaction. We were now fairly at sea. The land-breeze, with the delicious fragrance of the pine forests, reached us no longer. The plane of ocean was level no longer. Its very voice was changed. The waves grew more elaborate, and seemed to swell up with a greater degree of buoy-

ancy. Broad billows, whose ridges seemed like the backs of tossing giants in some agonizing sleep, bore up our little bark upon their mighty bosoms; then, suddenly shrinking away, left us to struggle and plunge in their deep hollows, until, with like caprice, others of greater weight and volume came to our relief, lifting us in like manner aloft, to leave us again below. Space and density, in glorious contrast and comparison, were all at once before us, in the blue world of vacuity hanging and stretching above, and the immense, seldom quiet, and murmuring mass, spread out below it. The land no longer met our eyes, though strained and stretched to the utmost. The clouds came down and hung about us, narrowing the horizon to a span, and mingling gloomily with the surges that kept howling perpetually around us, growing at each moment more and more threatening and restless. Not a speck beside our own little vessel was to be seen amid the wild infinity, which, admirably consorted, was at once beneath, above, around, and about us. Three days went by in this manner, with scarcely any alteration in the monotonous character of the prospect. Still the weather was fine—the clouds that gathered between, formed a shelter from the intensity of the

tropical sun, and, in that warm region and season, were not less a luxury than a relief. But, towards the evening of the third day out, there was a hazy and blood-red crown about the sun as he sank behind the swell in our front—a chiding and increasing motion of the black waters rushing impetuously forward to the wild cavern into which he descended. The wind freshened, and took to itself a melancholy and threatening tone, as it sang at intervals among the spars and cordage; and, while it continued of itself momentarily to change its burden, appeared, with a fine mystery, to warn us of a yet greater change in the aspect and temper of the dread elements all clustering around us. The old seamen looked grave and weatherwise, and shook their heads sagaciously when questioned about the prospect. The captain strode the deck impatiently and anxiously, giving his orders in a tone that left little doubt on my mind of a perfect familiarity on the part of the ancient *voyageur* with the undeceptive and boding countenance of sea and sky. Night came on, travelling hurriedly, and cloaked up in impenetrable gloom. The winds continued to freshen and increase; and but a single star, hanging out like hope, shot a glance of promise and en-

couragement through the pitchy and threatening atmosphere. The prospect was quite too uncheering to permit of much love, or many looks, on the part of fresh-water seamen. By common consent we went below, and, ransacking our trunks, were enabled to conjure up a pack of cards, with which, to the no small inconvenience of our captain, we sought to shut out from thought any association with the dim and dismal prospect we had just been contemplating. He did not, it is true, request us to lay aside our amusement, but he annoyed us excessively by his mutterings on the subject. He bade us beware, for that we were certainly bringing on a storm. He had seen it tried very often, he assured us, to produce such an effect, and he had never known it fail. His anxiety brought us the very amusement for which he was unwilling we should look to such a devilish instrument as a pack of cards. We had not needed this to convince us that the seaman was rather more given to superstition than well comported with the spirit of the age. He was a Connecticut man, thoroughly imbued with blue-laws, Cotton Mather, &c., and all the tales of demonology and witchcraft ever conceived or hatched in that most productive of all countries in the way of notions. He lectured us freely and

frequently upon his favourite topic, on which much familiarity had even made him eloquent. We encouraged him in his superstition, and derived our sport from its indulgence. Believing fervently himself every syllable he uttered, he could not understand our presumption in doubting, as we sometimes did, many of the veracious and marvellous legends of New-England and the "Sound," which he volunteered for our edification; and when at length convinced of the utter impossibility of overthrowing what, no doubt, he conceived our damnable heresy, he appeared to resign himself to the worst of fates. He evidently regarded each of us as a Jonah, not less worthy of the water and whale than our prototype of old; and, I make not the slightest question, would have tumbled us all overboard, without a solitary scruple, should the helm refuse to obey, or the masts go by the board. His stories, however, I am free to confess for myself, and, I may say, for my companions also, however our philosophy might be supposed to laugh at the matter, had a greater influence upon all of us than we were willing to admit to one another. Upon me, in particular, the impression produced was peculiar in its character. Not that, for a single moment, I could persuade myself, or be per-

suaded by others, that the mere playing of any game whatever could bring down upon us the wrath of heaven, or hatch a fiendish form upon the deep; but, naturally disposed to live and breathe only in an element of fiction and fantastic change, I drank in every thing savouring of the marvellous with an earnest and yielding spirit. He seemed to have been born and to have lived all his life in the "witch element." He had stories, moved by this agency, of every section of the world in which he had sojourned or travelled. Had seen the "old boy" himself, in the shape of a black pigeon, in a squall off the capes of Delaware; and once, on the night of the 27th June, had himself counted the phantom ships of the British fleet, under Sir Peter Parker, as they were towed over the bar of Charleston, in South Carolina, to the attack of Fort Moultrie. What seemed to vex him most of these things was, that the Carolinians, whom he pronounced a most obstinate and unmanageable race, refused to believe a word of the matter.

But his favourite legend, and one which he believed as honestly as the best authenticated passage in Scripture, was that of the "Flying Dutchman," who was driven out of the German Ocean; and in process of time, and for some such offence, was

doomed to a like travail with the wandering Jew. This identical visionary he had seen more than once, and on one occasion had nearly suffered by speaking him. It was only by dint of good-fortune and bad weather that he escaped unseen by that dreadful voyageur, to be noticed by whom is peril of storm, and wreck, and utter destruction. It was of this dangerous sail he had now to warn us. We were told that this sea, and almost the very portion which we now travelled, was that in which the Dutchman, at this season, usually sojourned for the exercise, with more perfect freedom, of his manifold vagaries—a power being given to him, according to our worthy captain, for the due and proper punishment of those who, when his spirit was abroad upon the waters, dared to palter and trifle in idle games, sport, and buffoonery. The voyager evidently apprehended much; and, as the gale freshened, his countenance grew more gloomy, and his words were more importunate in reference to those levities and sports which we had fallen into. To pacify him, at length, we forbore our game, and were compelled accordingly to refer to other resources for the recreation we required at such a time.

III.

This was no easy matter. Books are dull and difficult things at sea. We tried them, and they soon tired us. Conversation flagged, and we gave it up as soon. We lacked the continual provocation of society to afford us the materials for chat. What were we to do? The question was soon answered; and, with the warm confidence of youth, and forming, as it were, a little community of our own, we determined to relate the story of our several lives. There is no narrative of a life, however short or humble, if related truly and without constraint, which may not be made to interest and instruct the hearer; and our narratives, though void of morbid and romantic interest, were nevertheless more agreeable to us, circumstanced as we were, than the books, written by wise and ingenious heads, which we had often conned before. The story which most pleased and interested me was that of the youngest of our trio. His name was Hubert. He was but nineteen; a tall, slender, graceful youth, eminently handsome in face, possessed of a mind highly taught, and naturally intelligent, and warmed with a spirit at once modest and vivacious,

His story was a simple and common one. His manner of telling it, and his earnestness and simplicity of character, gave it the interest which attracted me to him. He was deeply enamoured of a maiden of his own age, who requited him with a corresponding love. They were engaged to be married upon his return; and he spoke of his engagement with so much ardour and devotedness, and dwelt with so much hopeful impatience upon the appointed period of his return, that I could have hugged him to my own heart for his whole-souled attachment. He gave us a picture, drawn by a vivid imagination, of the charms of his mistress, narrated the whole history of his fears and hopes, his subsequent avowal of his flame, the approving sanction with which she listened, and the bright prospect which, a few months distant, was to crown, and hallow, and realize all their mutual hopes. I need not say that we were equally communicative. I had no love narrative to unfold, but I had my hopes, my fears, my fortunes. We kept each other awake until a late hour, and retired to dream over what we had heard and related.

IV.

THAT night, in a dream, a singular vision came to my imagination—a vision so much mingled up with the truth, that, in the confusion of my sleeping thoughts, I could not disentangle their united threads, and draw the line of demarcation between the opposing provinces of fact and fancy. Night lay upon the ocean before me—her sable bosom heaving with a tumultuous motion, while the winds were rushing through the white foaming tresses of her hair. A sullen moaning came from the deep abysses, and then a dreadful shriek as of a thousand demons in the agony of a hopeless conflict. Suddenly, the deep opened yawningly before me—the dark bosom of Night seemed to be parted; and, from the wide cavity, a vast volume of uprushing flame swelled and dilated until it covered all the seas upon our track. When, in its diffusion, the light became somewhat subdued, I beheld a terrible form, vague, dark, and imperious in its attributes and its expressions, and, in my thought, I at once knew this dreadful presence to be that of the spirit of the storm. Feebly could mortal tongue describe the terrors of that remorseless

spectre; but, as I surveyed, my heart throbbed convulsively, the cold drops of sweat stood like heavy beads upon my clammy forehead, and the hairs upon my head, each endowed, at that moment, with a life and feeling of its own, rose upright in the cold apprehensions which assailed me. While I gazed, other spectres, no less terrible than the first, ascended from the deep abysses, and gathered in attendance upon their chief and master. The whole scene was before me, with all the regularity and method of a melodrame. I saw the demon glare with his meteor eye; I beheld him point with his bony finger; and the awful tones of his voice, though uttered in a foreign language, by a strange intuition, I was at that moment permitted to comprehend.

"Go," he cried, to the forms that glowered and gathered obediently, but in frowns, around him.

"We go, mighty Onesimarchus," was the reverential reply.

"Haste to yon riding hull; it has a victim. Look on its inmates—mingle in with their slumbers—follow the thoughts through their minds—examine the hopes in their hearts, and see if they scorn Onesimarchus."

And with the words there was a general rush of wings, and for a while I saw them around me. A

heavy slumber seemed then to possess me, and I was conscious of whispers in my ears—of inquiries proposed to me, and so beguilingly, that I answered as freely as to my best friend, telling all the hopes, and thoughts, and desires of my bosom. When the slumber passed away, I looked once more upon the broad ocean. The terrible demon still sat rocking upon his billowy throne, and lo! one of the returning attendants, who had been despatched for our examination, now stood before him.

"Thou hast done?" said Onesimarchus.

"I serve," was the reply.

"What know'st thou?"

"I found one who served thee, mighty Onesimarchus. In the wide world he is alone, yet he is serving thee. He has thoughts of fame and glory. He dreams of conquest. Man's honours glitter before his mind, and he schemes for power. He would sway beyond his sphere, and he must therefore serve thee. I left him still dreaming of empire and a field of strife."

"Let him dream on," exclaimed the exulting demon; "let him work out his dream by daylight. The phantom in his mind shall be still a phantom, though it hurries him to excess in my service. He shall live that he may labour against his proper

life, and only awaken to know what his madness hath been when he is lost for ever. He hath chosen his curse—he shall enjoy it."

Scarce had he dismissed the one follower, when a second returning spirit appeared before him.

"And thou?" said the demon.

"I have served thee well."

"What is he whom thou hast seen?"

"A wretch, whose sleep, though troubled, was unbroken, while he dreamed of wealth, of mighty hoards concealed from the rest of mankind, but to him revealed in secret. I left him toying with uncounted millions—gold and jewels, the wealth alike of the city and of the mine, were spread out before his gloating eye, and show the nature of the hopes which rule within him."

"No more," cried the demon, still exultingly. "No more—he too shall live—he labours in my service. How pleasant is it to behold man toiling for the unstayed enjoyment of excess, which is almost the only foe to his perfect happiness. The miser shall not perish—he shall live to enjoy his gains—he shall have all the life and happiness that his narrow and base soul is willing to give himself."

The second spirit disappeared, and a third stood

in his place. His reply to the question of his superior was not equally satisfactory with that of his predecessors.

"I sought," he said, "the spirit of a youth—of one whose hopes are few and humble, who asks but little from life, and has no aim which is not easily attainable by the pure and simple minded. Without ambition, he possesses content; without asking for much, he has more than he desires. He is happy in few friends—in fond relations, and he loves, and is beloved by, a maiden having a spirit formed to mate with his own, and requite his love, while confirming him in his pursuits. Returning to his native land for the consummation of his heart's best hope of happiness, he dreams even now that he is upon the threshold of that maiden's home. A disguise conceals him, and he designs to surprise her sweetly with his unlooked-for presence. That cottage in which she dwells contains at this moment the highest object of his ambition, the dearest object in his regards."

"Back and awake him!" cried the demon, in a voice of thunder. "Awake him to the truth. His feet never shall press the threshold of that cottage. Awake him, that he may be no longer blessed with even the dream of happiness. He shall feel the

venom of that tooth, which gnaws away the joy from the hope, and leaves a skeleton in its place. Then let him perish. How should he dare thus hope to escape from the allotted curse; pluck joy, as a blessed fruit, from the withered trees of Eden, and thus defraud the destiny which has made him mine? Let him perish. Let the rest live. They serve me in their aims and hopes. They serve me as they gain their wishes,—they die, daily, yet part with no breath—and wake, from their hourly struggles with death, to more acute pain and agonizing life. But he!—Let the maid he loves watch by the seaside—let her start, as on her sharpened ear falls the approaching footstep. She shall see him no more. Her hope is in her dreams. Her love is mine—mine only. Away! The victim is chosen."

V.

That victim was Hubert—the youth whose story had so much interested me. I knew it ever as the demon spake, and I saw it afterward. Suddenly, when the conference was over, the storm, which had somewhat subsided while it was in progress, was again renewed, and with a tenfold

fury. The ready and attending demons each sped away upon his task of terror, and I beheld them approach the ship in which I lay with a feeling of awful horror, that unnerved my faculties and silenced my speech. In a thousand vague but dreadful shapes they assailed us. With their boisterous blows they beat upon the sides of our bark, shattered the cordage, rent the sails, and finally assailed the masts, which they warped and bent, and finally snapped, as if they had been reeds. Methought, as was natural enough, our crew and passengers, in despair, were all assembled upon deck. It was then that I fixed my eyes upon Hubert; he seemed to anticipate his fate, which was not long delayed. A heavy sea came bounding over us, in the billows of which I beheld some terrible and huge forms inwrap themselves. When we recovered from the shock, and the seas had subsided, I no longer beheld the chosen victim among us. The demon had got his prey, and had departed. I awakened from this dreadful dream with awfully exciting sensations. These sensations were not diminished, as I found that the storm which threatened us, as we were about to retire the night before, had burst upon us in reality. That dream had a fearful aspect of truth,

to my eyes, in the first glance which I took of the morning prospect. It was a picture of the sublime—fearfully beautiful in its sublimity. I shall never forget the awful splendour—the dreadful, the gorgeous magnificence of the scene. I had not looked for ten minutes before the gale had increased to such a degree as would permit us to hang out but a miserable rag of sail, and the vessel, almost under her bare poles, was driving down upon and through the black and boiling waters. Nothing was now to be seen but the great deep, the vast and ponderous bulk and body of which groaned with its own wild and ungovernable labours. Horrible abysses opened before us—monstrous and ravenous billows rushed after us in uncouth gambols. Mountains gathering upon mountains, clustering and clashing together, threw up from the dreadful collision tall and spiry columns of white foam; which, keeping their position for a few seconds, would rush down towards us like so many demons of the sea, bestriding the billows, and directing their furies for our destruction. Under such impulses we drove on with a recklessness fully according with the dread spirit that presided over the scene which I had witnessed in my vision of the preceding night; at one time we darted

through the waters, occasionally rushing beneath them; then, emerging at another, and throwing off the spray that shone upon the black and terrific picture in a contrast as grotesque as the tinsel ornaments upon the robe of a tyrant in the thick of a battle or at the execution of thousands. On a sudden our course was arrested by a mountain of water, under which our vessel laboured. She broke through the impediment, however, with a fearful energy. Another sea came on, which we shipped, and the bark reeled without power beneath the surging and swelling mass. The picture of my dream was now dreadfully renewed. I was thrown from my feet, and seized with difficulty upon the side, the water rushing in volumes over me. Again our vessel sprung up and righted, but with a shock that again lost me the possession of my hold. At that moment a shriek of agony pierced my ears; and immediately beside me, a passenger, one of my companions, torn from his hold, was swept over the side into the unreturning ocean. He passed but a foot from me in his progress to the deep. How terrible was his cry of death—it will never pass out of my memory. He grasped desperately at my arm as he was borne along by me. He would have dragged me

with him to death, but I shrunk back; and his look—the gleam of his eye—its vacantly horrible expression, will never leave me. The vessel rushed on unheeding; and I saw him carried off by the waves buoyantly for many yards in her wake before he sank. He called upon Heaven—I heard his prayer—and the winds howled in his ears, and the waters mocked his supplications. Down he went, with one husky scream, that the seas half stifled—and the agony was over. That cry brought a chilling presentiment to my heart. Despair was in its tones to all. Though I seemed to live under a like influence, there was a degree of strange recklessness even in our scrupulous captain, for which I could not, and indeed did not, seek to account. I felt assured we could not long survive. Our vessel groaned and laboured fearfully; her seams opened, and the waters came bubbling and hissing in as if impatient of their prey. Still she went on, the violence of the storm contributing to the buoyancy of the billows, and aiding her in keeping afloat. But amid all this rage and tumult, this strife of warring and vexed elements, there was yet one moment in which they were under a universal calm—one awful moment, afforded seemingly by the demon who had roused the tempest,

that we might be enabled adequately to comprehend our situation. The feeling in this extremest moment was the same with all on board, without exception; and one unanimous prayer went up to Heaven.

VI.

THE calm was but for a moment. The winds and the waves went forth with redoubled violence and power. There seemed an impelling tempest from every point of the compass. Suddenly, a broad and vivid flash of lightning illuminated the black and boiling surges, lingering upon them sufficiently long to give us a full prospect of the scene. Immediately in our course came on a large and majestic vessel. She had no sails, but pursued a path directly in the teeth of the tempest. She came down upon us with the swiftness of an eagle. Her decks were bare, as if swept by a thousand seas—we were right in her path—there was no veering—no change of course—no hope. The voice of the captain rose above the tempest—it had a horror which the storm itself lacked. It spoke of the utter despair which was the feeling with all of us alike. "The Flying Dutchman,"

was all he could say, ere the supposed phantom was over us. I felt the shock—a single crash—and crew, cargo, vessel, all were down, crushed and writhing beneath its superior weight, struggling with, and finally sinking beneath, the exulting waters. But where was she, the mysterious bark that had destroyed us—gone, gone! no trace of her progress except our broken fragments—our sinking hopes.

VII.

There had been no time for preparation or for prayer. The fatal stranger had gone clean over, or indeed through us; and, though sinking myself, it appeared to me that I could see her keel, with a singular facility of optical penetration, cutting the green mountains behind me with the velocity of an arrow. Around me, scattered and sinking with myself, I beheld the fragments of our vessel, together with the struggling atoms of our crew and company. Among these, floating near me on a plank, I recognised the fair and melancholy features of young Hubert. I had thought him lost for ever. Where had he been in all the interval since the sea we shipped had swept him over-

board? I felt myself sinking, and seized upon him convulsively. The plank upon which he rested veered about, and, grasping it firmly, I raised my body to the surface. He felt conscious of its inadequacy to the task of supporting both of us, and strove to divert its direction from me. But in vain! Neither of us could prove capable of much, if any, generosity on such an occasion, and at such a time! Our grasp became more tenacious; and while death and desolation, and a nameless horror, enveloped every thing in which we were the sole surviving occupants, we were enemies, deadly and avowed enemies—we who had exchanged vows of the warmest friendship—to whom our several hopes and prospects had been unfolded with a confidence the most pure and unqualified—we sought each other's destruction as the only hope in which our own lives could repose. He appealed to me with tears—spoke of the young girl who awaited him—the joys that were promised him by the future—the possibility of both of us surviving if I would swim off to a neighbouring spar, which he strove to point out to me. But I saw no spar; I felt that he strove to deceive me, and I became indignant with his hypocrisy. What was his love to me? I laughed with a fierce fury in his face!

I too had loves and hopes, and a wild ambition, and I swore that I would not risk farther a life so precious in so many ways. My dream was surely about to be realized in the most fearful manner.

VIII.

The waters seemed to comprehend our situation —a swell threw us together, and our grasp was mutual. My hand was upon his throat with the gripe and energy of despair; his arms, in turn, were wound about my body. I strangled him. I held on, with a demon's clutch, till all his gaspings, all his struggles, and every pulsation, had entirely ceased. My strength, as if in close correspondence and sympathy with the spirit that prompted me, seemed that of a demon. In vain did he struggle. Could he hope to contend with the fiend of self, that nerved and corded every vein and muscle of my body? Fool that he was—but such was not his thought. He uttered but a single name—but a brief word—throughout all our contest. That name was the young girl's who had his pledges and his soul—that word was one of prayer for her and her happiness; and I smiled scornfully, even in our grapple of death, at the pusil-

lanimity of his boyish heart. I had aspirations too, and I mocked him with the utterance of my ambitious hopes. I told him of my anticipated triumphs; I predicted my own fame and future glory, and asked him the value of his worthless life in comparison with mine. He had but one answer to all this, and that consisted in the repetition of the beloved one's name. This but deepened my phrensy, and invigorated my hate. Had he uttered but one ambitious desire—had he been stimulated by one single dream of glory or of greatness, I had possibly spared his life. But there was something of insolence in the humility of his aim that provoked my deepest malignity. I grappled him more firmly than ever, and withdrew not my grasp until, by a flash of lightning, I beheld him blacker than the wild waters which were dashing around us. I felt the warm blood gush forth upon my hands and arms from his mouth and nostrils, and he hung heavily upon me. Would the deed had not been done! Would that I might have restored him—but the good spirit came too late for his hope and for my peace. I shrunk at last from my victim. I withdrew my grasp—but not so he. The paroxysm of death had confirmed the spasmodic hold which, in the struggle, he had

taken upon my body. My victory was something worse than defeat. It was not merely death—it was the grave, and its foul associations—its spectres and its worms—and they haunt me for ever.

IX.

We were supported by the buoyancy of the ocean alone, while under the violence of its dread excitements; and I felt assured that the relaxation to repose of the elements would carry us both down together. Vainly did I struggle to detach myself from his grasp. Freed from one hand, the other would suddenly clasp itself about my neck, with a tenacity only increased by every removal. His face was thrust close into mine—the eyes were lighted up by supernatural fires glaring in my own; while the teeth, chattering in the furious winds, kept up a perpetual cry of death—death—death—until I was mad—wild as the waters about me, and shrieking almost as loudly in concert with the storm. Fortunately, however, I had but little time for the contemplation of these terrors. The agony of long suspense was spared me. The storm was almost over. The plank on which I floated, no longer sustained by the continuous

swell, settled, at length, heavily down in its pause; and, without an effort, I sank beneath the waters, the corpse of my companion changing its position, and riding rigidly upon my shoulders. Ten thousand ships had not sustained me under such a pressure. The waters went over me with a roar of triumph, and I felt, with Clarence, how "horrid 'twas to drown." Even at that moment of dread and death, the memory of that vivid picture of the dramatist came to my senses, as I realized all its intensely fearful features in my own fate. What was that fate? The question was indeed difficult of solution, for I did not perish. I was not deprived of sense or feeling, though shut in from the blessed air, and pressed upon and surrounded by the rolling and yet turbulent waters. For leagues, apparently, could I behold the new domain in which I was now, perforce, a resident; the cold corpse still hanging loosely, but with a firm grasp, about my shoulders. I settled at length upon a rock of a broad surface, which, in turn, rested upon a fine gravelly bed of white sand. Shrinking, and sheltering themselves in innumerable crevices of the rocks around me, from the violence of the storm that had raged above, I was enabled in a little time to behold the numberless varieties of the finny tribe that dwelt

in the mighty seas. Many were the ferocious monsters by which I was surrounded, and from which I was only safe through the influence of their own terrors. There were huge serpents, lions, and tigers of the ocean. There roved the angry and ever hungry shark—his white teeth, showing like the finest saws, promising little pause in the banquet on his prey. There leaped the lively porpoise—there swam the sword-fish, and galloped the sea-horse. They were not long in their advances. I saw the sea-wolf prepare to spring—the shark darted like an arrow on my path, and, with a horror too deep for expression, I struck forth into the billows, and strove once more for the upper air. A blow, from what quarter I know not, struck the corpse from my shoulders, and was spent upon my head. My body was seized by a power, in whose grasp all vigour was gone, and every muscle instantly relaxed.

X.

On a sudden the entire character of the scene was strangely altered. Where was I? What did I then behold? My enemies now assumed a new guise and appearance, and in place of fish, and

beast, and reptile, I perceived myself closely surrounded by a crowd of old and young ladies, busily employed with a dozen smelling-bottles, which they vigorously and most industriously employed in application to my nostrils. Instead of a billowy dwelling in the deeps, I was in possession of the large double family pew in the well-known meeting-house. I had never been to sea—had not killed my companion—was not drowned, and hope never to be; but the whole affair was a vast effort of *diablerie*—a horrible trick of the *incubi*, got up by the foul fiend himself, and none other, for my especial exposure and mortification. The old ladies told me I had been trying to swim in the pew; the young ladies spoke of an endeavour to embrace the prettiest among them; the gauntlike, however, most charitably put all down to a spiritual influence; as—*entre nous*—doubtless, it was. So much for taking late dinners with a friend, drinking my two bottles of Madeira, and going to a night meeting, when I should have gone to bed.

MAJOR ROCKET.

"To be slow is to be most fast in erring. He shall go wrong who goes not with the occasion, and steer wide that wavers. Your man of deliberation is of this temper. He would think what he does, and he does nothing because of his thinking. He is your crab-philosopher, whose journey is ever a backward journey, even across the sands where there is need of haste. Be it your prompt man, whose mind is so ready to its matter that it is quick as with instinct. Such a man will go wrong when the comets show, but your deliberate man beats against every star in the heavens."

MAJOR ROCKET.

I.

MINE is an awkward nature—I have never been apt at taking the tide of fortune, even when setting most auspiciously in the true direction. Somehow I invariably see the chance when too late, put off its employment, and linger until the ebb, and then, when the effort is of no avail, I plunge incontinently forward. As you may suppose, my course then is entirely up-hill, or, to continue the figure, up-current—full of *riffles*, *snags*, and *sawyers*—like that of a Mississippi steamboat. In large and little matters, all the same, it is never my good fortune to take advantage of the opportunity. I can see it well enough after it has gone by, and when there is no recall, but not before. Looking back upon the past time, and enumerating to myself my lost chances, their name seems to be legion, and they stand before me like so many living and mocking commentaries upon my dilly-dallying and

sluggish disposition. The misfortune is, that I can neither complain of others nor of myself—were I to do the one, I feel that I should be unjust; and there is no necessity for the other. They anticipate my self-reproaches; and in this respect, at least, they serve me, and save me from a world of trouble. Nor is my knowledge of my own failing confined to myself; my friends and enemies are alike acquainted with it, and the nickname of "Topic the Unready," which they have given me, pursues me in every quarter, and keeps pace with my destiny. The stage and steamboat are always sure to leave me just as I arrive out of breath; the show has just closed or is gone before I look upon it, and there is sure to be some acquaintance at hand, at the unlucky moment of disappointment, to exclaim, "Ah, Topic, my dear fellow—as usual—just in time to be—too late!"

II.

THIS is the curse!—I came into the world by half an hour too late, and after the proper time. I have tried through life, but in vain, to recover that lost half hour. In all things I feel its loss—in

trifling and important concerns I suffer by it equally; and, whether I love or hate—whether I come to woo or fight—I am still sure never to be in time—I am always "Topic the Unready." It is true that my friends ascribe my misfortunes to another cause, and insist that my inveterate habit of talking, in illustration of which they have given me the first part of my title, is the sole occasion of my various mishaps; but either I do not know myself, which would be strange indeed, or they are studiously bent to misrepresent me. I never talk out of season, though, I confess, I frequently come too late to talk with any hope of success. Some other confounded fellow has "used up" all my arguments, or the audience departs as I begin to lay them down. Everybody admits, however, that I talk well; yet they contend, and most strangely too, that there is no necessity for me to talk at all. Everybody insists that I am always in too great a hurry—yet they clamour that I am never in time. My friends are continually asking my opinion, and provoking me to argument, yet they are sure never to listen to me out, or acknowledge the justice of what I say; and I am mortified to death, daily, to discover that they are invariably inclined to agree in opinion, after all I have said, with some green-

eyed man sitting in a corner, who has only shaken his head and said—nothing.

III.

But let me be more particular, that my misfortunes may be the better understood. There was Emily Postlethwaite—a girl among a thousand—my love affairs with her may not inaptly illustrate the general difficulties of my situation. I was just half an hour too late with her. But you shall hear. I loved her—I most certainly loved her—and used to talk with her for hours—and though, it is true, I never said to her a word about love, I yet thought, and think still, that I had made a favourable impression upon her heart. I was always at her residence—and I talked with her father, her mother, her grandmother, great-grandmother, and thirty-six cousins, all in turn, and all at a time; and it is generally admitted that I talked admirably well to all of them—so admirably that they all preferred infinitely to hear me talk to saying any thing themselves—and this I hold to be the most conclusive evidence. To Emily, however, I was devoted. I escorted her here and there, and followed her everywhere. I wrote song and sonnet in her

favour—some of them published in the magazines, and acknowledged to be very pretty. I spoke to her, and sang to her—rode with her, and walked with her—danced with her, and dined with her—in short, did every thing that the most familiar lover might with propriety do, except, perhaps, the one thing most necessary of all—though I talked with her incessantly, I never talked of the one and only subject—I never popped the question.

IV.

But I had meditated the matter often, and had at length come to the resolution to do so. I had decided that the time had now arrived, and I had sufficiently paved the way for the introduction of the momentous subject; and, one evening, when my thoughts had been prepared with previous thinking, and my spirits provoked by previous champaign, I sallied forth from my lodgings, almost in bridal trim, and took my way to Mr. Postlethwaite's fashionable residence in Chestnut-street. The family was all at home, and Emily herself looked lovelier than ever. I felt myself unavoidably growing eloquent as I surveyed her, and felt that I should make my proposals after

the most graceful and effective manner; but I struggled and kept myself from premature speech, and determined to loiter among the company, quietly in waiting, but still earnest and impatient for the desired opportunity. I had evidently some time to wait, as there was something of company present. There was a poet and a painter, and several other persons given to such trifling pursuits! I was, to speak with due modesty, the only philosopher in the room; and I was something more than surprised to find my fair one devoting much more of her time to my neighbours than it struck me was altogether consistent with good sense and a proper understanding. Above all, I was vexed to find her so attentive to my how-d'ye-do acquaintance, Bill Walton, whom, in order that he should properly judge of the merits of my chosen, I had myself introduced to her acquaintance. But this attention to him, upon second thought, I set down entirely to her regard for me.

Some fine engravings from Helvetian scenery lay upon the table before us, to which Walton had called her attention.

"We have no such achievements from the hands of our artists, Miss Emily," said he—"indeed, we have not the material—we want the

scenery itself. Such wondrous indications of her power nature does not often exhibit to our eyes in this country."

It was then the fashion, and is too much now, to deny and to disparage the wonderful beauties, natural and moral, and, indeed, every thing which is peculiar to our country; and Emily, to my great disquiet, readily adopted the sentiment of Walton. Her reply annoyed me, and there was something in her look at Walton, while she spoke, which added to my inconvenience a little.

"None, none," she replied, in a tone of disappointment and regret, coupled at the same time with an air of abstraction, which, however, seemed to disappear as Walton, in a whisper, concluded his remark.

Mr. Cambridge, a member of Congress, a gentleman of some pretension and appearance, interfered:

"We are not deficient, however, in the objects of moral contemplation," he said, with an air of the schools, "though we may lack," he continued, "some few of the physical wonders which are here delineated. Has not 'Liberty' made an effort, and are not her exhibitions in America upon a scale as magnificent as these rude rocks, and shows, and

'shelvings down?' Her achievements in our land, which, by-the-way, I must take occasion to say, is just as well supplied with stupendous and striking scenery as any other, have thrown into a just obscurity the mere physical and natural wonders of the old world. Our moral and political stature—"

Here I interposed. I saw what was coming, and could not forbear exclaiming, while falling, unhappily for myself, into the very error of habit I was seeking to reprove—"Nay, my good sir, let us have no more of this same *ad captandum* about what we are and what we may be. That would do very well for a Whig or Tammany Hall meeting, and would admirably suit and split the ears of the groundlings, but cannot very greatly enlighten or amuse the intellect of a fashionable young lady. What does Miss Emily care whether 'Liberty' prefers ours to all other countries or not? The thing affects her in neither one way nor another. Besides, freedom is a word not known in the vocabulary of a modern fair one and fashionable. Liberty is democratic and vulgar, and rich merchants and fine ladies have nothing to do with it. The ladies have no right even to talk or dream of it, since they toil for empire and the proper increase of authority. Their business is conquest and cap-

tives. Talk to them of bonds rather, of dungeons in the arms of love: of chains, though they be made of flowers; and servitude, though it be in the gardens of beauty, and in the cultivation of those plants which are the favourite of that worst of tyrants, love! Tell them of bands of roses, and shackles of jessamines and honeysuckle, and prisons of moon-lighted and leaf-covered bowers: any thing but liberty. We have no liberty. Neither you, nor I, nor any of our sex. We are slaves to some despotism or other; and obtain our emancipation from one, only to run headlong and blind into another of even worse character. If we are not slaves of women, we are of men, and *vice versâ*. We have no liberty. We are as much in bondage as any people under the sun. In fact, there can be no freedom for the great mass. They were never intended to be free. Take from them that restraint, which, if it be not chains actually, is nevertheless so in effect, and they are the veriest brutes and savages that walk. There are some men born expressly to be slaves—liberty would be poison and death to them, as poison in some cases —that of Mithridates of Pontus for instance—is healthful and nutritious."

"Dear me, Mr. Topic, how long you can talk on

so tedious a subject. I'm sure I have not heard a single syllable of all you have been saying, except one pretty sentence about jessamines and honeysuckles. Your speech has been like a wide wilderness, into which, being a lover of steril solitude, you have, with a niggardly hand, admitted but a few flowers, and those more for the sake of contrast than for their own beauty and the relief which they might bring."

So spake a lively little girl whom I had not before remarked, so earnestly had I been engaged in my observations.

"And you, miss," I replied, "have been the industrious bee to ferret and find out those few flowers, without regarding the whole wilderness you speak of beside. Yet is that wilderness—though it forms so trifling an object of our contemplation—spread out in all its variety and loveliness, as, at any time in our country we may behold it, as abundantly stored with the *materiel* of the sublime, as this bungling and confused succession of clouds and mountains, which, for the last ten minutes, you have all been so gravely admiring."

"Oh, how can you think so?" exclaimed the lady. "I'm sure these are so *pretty*."

"What an epithet for a view like this!" whis-

pered the painter, almost audibly, in my ear. The young girl, whose admiration, like that of many fashionable people where the arts are concerned, was affected, seemed herself conscious of her *faux pas*, and the malapropos phrase of which she had been guilty, and the blush that suffused her cheek was a sufficient atonement for the offence. She sidled off to an opposite corner, and I proceeded in my address to the fair Emily; but, to my surprise, discovered, for the first time, that she was not in hearing, but at the opposite end of the room, in company and close conversation with Walton. To be caught, and to catch myself, in a soliloquy, as had really been the case so far as she was concerned, was horrible, and I hastily advanced to apologize; when, suddenly retreating, she left the apartment. "Confusion worse confounded!" What could this mean? I turned for explanation to my friend Walton, who, soon enough for civility, and quite too soon for my impatience, thus satisfied all my inquiries.

"My dear Topic, I owe you a thousand thanks."

"For what, Bill?"

"You have done me a most gracious and friendly service."

"Ah—how?" was my wondering reply. He proceeded.

"You have proved yourself not more friendly than judicious."

My wonder kept me silent. He continued.

"I can well understand, and shall ever appreciate, your friendship. That long speech of yours was admirably put in. It gave me an opportunity of which I have been very desirous, and for which, as you may well imagine, I had been long anxious. In short, while you spoke, I spoke. While you speechified the rest, I said the difficult words to my sweet Emily in the opposite corner; and to you, my dear fellow, as my best friend, and one who has so greatly assisted me in this, I am bound to say that all is as we could wish it. She has consented to make me happy, and I have only time and breath to tell you that you must get yourself in readiness to assist me through the ceremony, which takes place on the ensuing Monday night, precisely at eight o'clock. Once more, Topic, my dear fellow, accept my thanks for that judicious and well-timed speech, and for the admirable and well-employed opportunity which it afforded me."

V.

I WAS astounded, as well I might be. Could any thing possibly have been more astounding? I felt it in my heart to knock him down. I grew wolfish as I surveyed him; and, but for the approach of the company and his own general innocence of look, I might have done some brutal and improper act on the spot. But I continued to keep my temper. What I muttered to him in reply I know not. It was something or nothing, and that, in my excited state of feeling, means every thing. I did not linger long at Mr. Postlethwaite's that evening, but hurried home to my lodgings, mortified to the soul, that, in that, as in every leading particular of my life and fortunes, I had found myself too late.

VI.

THE story got abroad, and I was waited upon by a *soi-disant* friend. He had heard it, and he came to me full of sympathy and sulphuric acid. He was a fire-eater—a regular blunderbuss of valour —a man who made no more of a brace of bullets,

hair triggers, and seven moderate pistols, than I did of a cucumber in cholera-time. He shook my hand warmly.

"I am sorry for it," said he—"it's a bad business."

"Sorry for what, Major Rocket?"

"Why, is it not true that you have been bamboozled by Walton? It's all about town."

I explained—I told the true story.

"He's a d—d rascal. You must make him toe the mark. He has behaved shamefully, to take advantage of the confidence of a friend."

"But I did not tell him of my intentions, major."

"No matter. He should have known them. He was bound to know them, and I make bold to assert that he did know them, else how should the opinion be so general about town that he did, and had made use of you?"

"Made use of me?" I exclaimed, furiously.

"Ay, made use of you—that is the phrase—none other. You must fight him—you must put a bullet through him, Mr. Topic. You must give him a leaden lesson of good manners, which he may digest at leisure."

"Do you think I must?" I asked of my d—d good-natured friend.

"'Think—it must be done—there is no help, unless you would expose yourself to the laughter of the whole city. Chestnut-street, already, is all agape; and the expectation of the public that there will be a fight, shows the absolute necessity of the thing. I doubt not that the evening papers will have an *on dit* on the subject, and Walsh, in to-morrow's 'National,' will more fully enforce the necessity by quoting Cicero and the fathers on the subject—*pro* or *con*. It is inevitable, not only that you should fight, but that you should kill him. No courteous forbearance in this. You are bound in honour to blow his brains out, if you do not desire that the impression should go abroad that you have none of your own."

I could not exactly understand the force of his reasoning, but the absolute force of necessity was quite another thing. I was not to be driven out of the community by public opinion. Better die than that.

"Major Rocket, will you serve me?" I demanded. The major was overjoyed at the requisition—he was happy to be my friend.

"You shall take my challenge to Mr. Walton."

"I will."

"I will at once proceed to write it"

I did so. The challenge was peremptory. It called for redress, not explanation. Rocket was delighted.

"That's right," said he; "no mincing such matters. I hate your alternatives. This mode of accounting for, and explaining—of not meaning to do what you have done, and of regretting the commission of that which you have committed in perfect coolness, and after just deliberation—is weak and unwholesome. There is but one way in a difficulty, and that is, to fight it out. To try to untangle is only to get into new entanglements—the knot of Gordius is only to be unloosed by the sword of Alexander."

Major Rocket had a knack of saying fine things; and before he was done talking, and before I was done hearing that night, I became desperately bent upon shooting Walton through the head. Rocket was too old a stager, and loved such sports too well, not to move upon his mission with alacrity; and, at the conclusion of the first bottle, he set out for the lodgings of my traitorous friend Walton.

VII

If I had been surprised and astounded by the sudden and quite unlooked-for success of Walton with Emily, I had the satisfaction of knowing from Major Rocket that he was not less so on receiving my message. His surprise, indeed, as Rocket assured me with infinite satisfaction, was so positively unrestrainable as to be unbecoming and discreditable. He started and trembled under his annoyance and apprehension.

"Why, what the d—l is the matter with Topic?"

"*Mr.* Topic, if you please," said my *friend* for the nonce, with an air of precision which had its object, and was not without its due effect upon the nerves of Walton.

"Well, sir," he said, impatiently, "*Mr.* Topic, to oblige you; though, as my most intimate friend, I hold it perfectly excusable to drop the usual prefix."

"Not so, Mr. Walton, if you please. 'Familiarity breeds contempt.' When men come to address, or to speak of, each other, and omit the usual terms of courtesy which convention has established, they open the door for all sorts of rudeness. All

tyrannies begin moderately enough,—if they did not, they never would make any headway. They take liberties by degrees, till they usurp the possession and control of all liberty. Vulgarity begins in this way in most cases; and, to prevent vulgarity from becoming insolent, you must check it on the threshold. Let it once get its head in, and the shoulders inevitably follow. Pardon me then, sir, if I insist that, in speaking to me, Major Pertinax Rocket, or in speaking of my friend, in my presence at least, you omit none of the usual terms of civility."

This was cool and consolatory enough. Poor Walton was dumb for several minutes, and perfectly bewildered. Rocket grew impatient.

"What answer to my friend, sir?" he demanded.

"I will see Mr. Topic for myself, Major Rocket."

"You cannot, sir."

"How,—cannot?"

"No, sir."

"And why not, I pray you?"

"Because he cannot see you, in the first place; and, in the next, because I will neither suffer him to see you nor you to see him."

"Ha! sir."

"Just so, Mr. Walton; and, let me add, that the desire which you have expressed to thrust me, his representative, aside, and go to my principal, conveys a reflection upon my honour, and a doubt of my integrity, which are personally offensive, and which must be atoned for. At present, however, I defer my claim to satisfaction to that urged by my friend, for whom I beg your immediate answer."

Rocket was a man not to be trifled with, and Walton soon discovered that. Rocket was too courteous and considerate by half to waive his own claim to honour in place of mine; but he meant honourably, and did it for the best. Walton saw that there was no alternative, and referred my second to his friend, Lieutenant Thompson, of the Piscataqua Volunteers; and Major Rocket, who lost no time in a business of so delicate a texture, immediately proceeded to wait upon the referee.

VIII.

"Well, what are the terms, major?" I demanded of my friend, as he entered my chamber the next morning.

"Glorious! grand!" were the superlative words in which he replied.

"When are we to meet?" I next asked.

"On Wednesday next, at *Oxley's* Farm. I endeavoured to get it fixed for Monday, but the d——d milksop insists, like a fool as he is, upon getting married first—a condition which will be very apt to carry off much of the courage which he has left."

"Why, do you think that will affect him?" was my inquiry.

"Yes—so long as the condition is new. A year hence he might not be so reluctant to a fight—indeed, I have known such an event rather a desirable one to most husbands after such a period."

Rocket was a decided bachelor, had been jilted once, and turned woman-hater ever after. I could readily see that his prejudices had somewhat impaired his judgment. I proceeded with my inquiries.

"The distance?"

"Ay—that is the fortunate hit—he insisted upon five paces, thinking to bully us, as he knew my favourite distance was seven; but he was mistaken in his man. I took him up at the word."

"What! five paces!" I exclaimed, in horror—"why, my dear major, there is no sort of chance—we shall both be killed."

"To be sure you will," he answered, with exemplary composure, "to be sure you will, unless one kills the other with the word. Quick shooting is safe shooting, and every thing depends upon your promptness. On that head I must give you some lessons, and the sooner we go out to practise the better"

IX.

THAT very afternoon we went out to practise, and the major soon put me in the way of line-shooting with such precision as to make it a *caution*, as they say in Kentucky.

"It is well," he said, among other things, "to acquire a perfect knowledge of the pistol-handle—the grasp is very important; but I do not think it advisable to practise at any fixed distance, where you are the challenger, until the distance is prescribed at which you are to fight. Men who practise at a given distance habitually, are apt to be disquieted with any change; and to be a dead shot at ten paces is sometimes apt to interfere with good shooting at seven. I would rather that my principal should not know how to shoot at all until the time comes, and the distance is prescribed.

In three days I can put him in the way of doing mischief; and, unless his opponent is a very thirsty and anxious one, three days will be allowed at least."

We had three days—and we practised successfully. Before that time was ended I could cut my bamboo between two joints, seven inches asunder, at every shot.

"This will do," said Rocket. "We shall have rare sport. Better shooting has not been seen for a long time; and, if you do not put your bullet alongside of his third button, I shall be monstrous mortified. But come—I will sup with you to-night, that we may the better talk over our preparations for the morrow."

X.

"We go out at eight to-morrow morning," said Rocket to me, while our supper was getting ready. "You must meet me at seven, in order that we may lose no time. It would be horrible not to be there before them."

"Horrible!" I exclaimed, unconsciously, for my thoughts were busy elsewhere.

"Let us see that our watches agree," was his

suggestion. Mechanically I exhibited mine. They did agree within two seconds. It was by both of us a few minutes short of six o'clock. At half past six on the ensuing morning I was to meet him at the boat. This matter settled, we next proceeded to supper.

"Eat moderately," was his direction—one, by-the-way, which he did not himself follow.

"Eat moderately. It is an ugly thing to have a bullet come into a crowded stomach. It mortally increases the crowd, and provokes a singular and most unpleasant excitement in the neighbourhood."

"It will do that any how," was my response, while I laid the breast and wing of a roast duck upon my plate—"it will have that effect whether I eat much or little."

"By no means," he cried, quickly; "the difference is material, I assure you. A bullet after a hearty supper in the domestic territory is almost always certain to be fatal; and I must beg that you will confine yourself to the wing of that duck alone—put the breast on my plate—it looks tempting—and, as your affair is to be settled before I can possibly enjoy mine, I think I may venture upon it with safety."

appeared to me that Rocket had been quite too hasty. After all, I had never confided my secret to Walton—nor had he abused my confidence. I began to feel kindly towards my old friend; but then—my honour; and, as Rocket said, all Chestnut-street was full of it. The thing was now unavoidable, and to get through with it manfully was the only help. I took my position before the glass. I threw my legs apart, after the French mode; but, though giving great solidity, the straddle seemed to increase terribly the extent of surface for his aim. I contracted my legs, threw the heel of the left foot in against the ankle joint of the right, and surveyed narrowly the effect of this position. The left knee was protruded greatly, to its undue exposure. While I tried thus the comparative advantages of several positions, I was struck, for the first time in my life, with the unhappy and singular distension of my corporation. Really, I had never before suspected myself of being so important a personage in the community. But the growth of a region which would have fairly entitled me to a seat among the fathers of the city, in the capacity of an alderman, was decidedly unnecessary to one about to fight a duel; and the difficulty on the part of this obtrusive

sanguine temperament. It neutralizes the excess of blood and vivacity, and secures the true equilibrium. An overflow of vivacity is quite as bad as a deficiency. Extremes meet; and an excess in your case would bring about a reaction which would show like timidity. Take porter; it is an admirable stuff for your sanguine person. The German would go mad with his imagination but for the sedative beer which he drinks, and which gives him solidity."

I drank porter to please him; and, having completed our preparations, he took charge of my pistols and left me for the night.

XI.

What a night that was to me! How full of dreams, and thoughts, and fancies, of every form of annoyance. Certainly, the idea of going out the next morning to mortal combat was excessively unpleasant. Besides, such an engagement will admit of no excuse. A party of pleasure of almost any other sort could be interrupted by cloudy weather; but when we go out to meet a friend in honourable fight, even a storm is of no service. I thought over the matter in a thousand ways. It

about instantly. I had my will to make—some little things to leave, and some kind thoughts and good wishes to bequeath along with them. Even a bachelor has his cares and comforts of this complexion. These letters were only to be sent in the event of my falling. They did not take me long. When they were finished I thought of Emily Postlethwaite. "Emily, Emily!" I exclaimed, in the bitterness of my heart—"wherefore art thou Emily?"—or rather, "wherefore art thou Emily Walton now, and Emily Postlethwaite no longer?" She had been married the previous night, and he, my false friend, he had revelled upon those lips which I had so fondly looked to call my own. The thought roused and enraged me.

"But no matter!" I exclaimed aloud; "no matter. He will not enjoy them long. I will put a bullet through his head, the villain. I will tomahawk and scalp him. I'd kill him if he had a thousand wives, and each of them as fond of him as she!"

With this elegant determination I felt my anger return, and I now became exceedingly anxious to look my rival in the face. But it was not yet time. The hours seemed to move slowly. My watch was short of six by several minutes. I was

to meet Rocket at half past six, and we were to be on the ground at seven. There was more than time enough. Yet, better too soon by an hour than late by a minute. With this proverb I determined to set forth to join Rocket at his lodgings. I took one more look at the glass. It was a satisfactory glance. I was never in better trim, and I could not avoid the unpleasant reflection which forced itself upon me at that moment, that my fair, handsome face, and newly-trimmed luxuriant whiskers, might, a few hours hence, be soiled in the unbecoming sands of the Jersey shore. Such thoughts are unpleasing, if not unbecoming. I made an effort to dismiss them from my mind, and supply their place with those which were more pleasant. Another glance at the mirror suggested them. What could have possessed Emily Postlethwaite to prefer the sallow phiz of Walton to the becoming red and white of mine? Such villanous taste on her part half reconciled me to her loss. But it was not that she preferred him—it was that she did not hope for me. The girl was modest, and I—I had been too slow. My unready habit lost me the opportunity, which, if employed, must have found me successful. The thought vexed me, and I was reminded to look at my watch for fear of being too

late now. "I will be in time for my revenge, at least," was the involuntary soliloquy. The hour was still short of six—time moved slowly for my impatience, but I was bent to be in season. I hurried down stairs, but met with an interruption ere I got to the bottom. There was my landlady.

XIII.

"MRS. JENKINS, good morning. You are bright and busy, I see, madam, as usual."

The dear old damsel answered with a pleasant chuckle.

"Ah, yes, sir, I am always busy; but it's many a long year since I could be called bright. I'm dull enough nowadays, and it was only yesterday that I tried my best to thread a coarse needle, but I couldn't find the eye for the life of me, no more than if I had none of my own."

I condoled with her; but the old lady, who was an inveterate talker, did not want condolence so much as somebody to talk to or at; and she would have kept me, I verily believe, for three mortal hours at the foot of the stairs, the brush in her hand, moved at intervals by way of apology over the steps at my feet, while she inflicted upon me a

long history of her troubles in the domestic world. Like all people at the north, she loved to complain about the servants—the insolent negroes, and the stupid Irish, and the swinish Swedish, and the dingy Dutch—topics which are never-failing in the mouths of some housekeepers in the cities of Brotherly Love and Gotham, and by the suggestion of which they contrive to excuse their own parsimony, want of hospitality, and perfect indifference to the claims of society and the stranger. I heard her with some impatience; and, while listening to the old story, I remembered that she had a claim upon me. The poor old creature would want money in a few days, and a bullet through my abdomen would be as distressing to her, unless I paid her bill beforehand, as it would be annoying and inconvenient to me. Abruptly enough, therefore, I insisted upon her making it out at once. The demand suggested to her jealous apprehension a new and unlooked-for evil. She apprehended now the loss of her lodger.

"Bless my old soul, Mr. Topic—why, what's the matter? You don't mean—you surely can't intend to leave me. I hope I have done nothing to give offence. Perhaps the servants—ah, Mr. Topic—don't let them trouble you. Richard has

been giving you impertinence, I see it now—he is a vile wretch, and I will instantly turn him off. He will drive me mad; or perhaps it is Betty, the chambermaid—it can be no other. The audacious hussy, she has been saucy to you—there's no bearing with her any longer, and I'll not sleep again till I have her out of the house. She shall never darken these doors again so long as I am the proprietor. The trollop, to insult my boarders—a wretched baggage—you would not have believed it, sir, but I picked that wench up in the street, sir—a poor, half-starved creature—a mere skeleton, and you see her now. She is as fat as she can go, and this is the return I get for my kindness. Six dollars a month, sir, she has had from me for the last five months, and now to insult my lodgers. But she shall tramp, and Richard shall tramp—they shall all tramp, sir, I assure you, rather than you should leave the house on their account. Here—Richard, Betty, Jane, Lucilla—"

Was there ever such an old goose? I stopped her in the midst of her howlings, though with monstrous great difficulty.

"Mrs. Jenkins—I am not going to leave your odgings, unless I die before I come back, which I shall probably do in the course of the afternoon.

But, whether I live or die, I am desirous of paying up my little bill; and if you will only sit down and give it me in the course of a few moments, you will infinitely oblige me."

"Dear me, Mr. Topic, but it's very early; you needn't be in any hurry."

I looked at my watch. It was not yet six. There was time enough, it was true, but I still hurried her. Better soon than late. Mrs. Jenkins, however, was not a lady to be easily hurried. She had a speech to make for every item.

"Three weeks and three days—twenty-four days, Mr. Topic, at one dollar by the day—"

"Is twenty-four dollars, Mrs. Jenkins."

"Right, sir, exactly. Then, sir, a friend on the 7th is $0 50

"A friend on the 9th . . . 0 50

"A friend at supper on the 10th is . 0 50

"Two friends on the 13th . . 1 00."

I tried to stop her.

"Say the whole amount, Mrs. Jenkins,—don't mind the items. The amount total."

In vain—the old lady feared to cheat herself, as she had been rather more rapid in making out her bill than usual; and no expostulation or impatience on my part could move her a jot. She

proceeded to enumerate friends on this day, friends on that—wine, so many bottles—boot-cleaning, so many weeks—lamps and oil for so many weeks—and Heaven only knows how many items of charge, industriously put together by an ingenious and experienced landlady, educated in her art in Philadelphia. I got away at last, having satisfied my conscience by paying her bill in full. I dreaded lest I might be too late for my engagement, for it seemed to me in my impatience that I had spent an hour in this idle controversy with Mrs. Jenkins; but, looking at my watch, I found that I was safe,—that it was still short of six o'clock.

XIV.

When I got to Rocket's lodgings, to my great surprise, I found that he was already gone. What a restless and impatient fellow. I looked at my watch, and found, to my great satisfaction, that I was still before my time, and that no blame could possibly be attributed to me. But I saw through Rocket's intentions. He was such a monstrous fire-eater, that I felt confident he had hurried off in order to get a first shot with Walton in advance of me. This was unkind. I certainly had the prior

claim, though, when I reflected how great a pleasure it was to Rocket, I could not find it in my heart to reproach him. Going down to the pier, where I purposed to take a boat, an urchin came to me to sell morning papers. I bought a Gazette and an Inquirer, at sixpence each, but the lad could not change the Mexican which I gave him until he had run a hundred yards off, and kept me waiting ten minutes. While he was gone I engaged a boat, and bought some peaches. Between the peaches and the papers I amused myself well enough until I crossed the river. I then took a hack, and bade the fellow drive to Oxley's Farm, only five miles distant. While we rode I read. The papers amused me, and I had half forgotten the business I was bent upon when a sudden crash, and dash, and splash, aroused me from my unconsciousness. Our hack was utterly demolished, and I found myself scrambling out of it and into a ditch, in which it partially lay. The vile old vehicle, a Jersey transaction, had actually gone to pieces; and the journey was only half performed.

"Great Heaven! driver, what are we to do? I shall be too late!"

"Not a bit!" said the rascal, surlily enough.

"Why, how do you know any thing about it?" I asked, angrily, chafed at the fellow's insolence.

"Guess you're guine after no good!" he said, contemptuously, in reply. I could have brained him where he stood, but I had no time. I had two miles to walk, but, looking at my watch, I found that I was still in season. It was not yet six o'clock. I thrust my remaining peaches and papers into my pocket, and hurried away as fast as I could; glad to find that, in spite of all my mishaps and delays of the morning, I should still be in time.

XV.

In less than an hour I arrived upon the ground. This was excellent walking on a Jersey road. There, sure enough, I found all the parties. Rocket was the first to receive me. His countenance boded bad weather. His mood was evidently soured by something. His first words were scarcely civil.

"Well, sir! what the d——l has kept you from your appointment?"

I felt disposed to answer him sharply; but,

as we were in the presence of our opponents, I tried to be as calm and gentle as possible.

"Kept me, major? I have been detained and delayed,—that is true,—but, thank Heaven, I am true in this particular to my appointment."

"True to your appointment?—the d——l you are!" exclaimed he, with a savage countenance. "I should like to know how you make that out? You were to meet me at half after six, and we were to have been upon the ground at seven."

"Well!" I exclaimed, coolly pulling out my watch, "here I am; and, as you see, it is not even six yet. Look!"

"Why, what the d——l sort of a watch is that, Mr. Topic?" was the exclamation of Rocket. "Not six?—why, sir, it is after seven!"

I put my watch to my ear, and was aghast. She had run down. I had neglected winding her up, as was my usual habit, during the previous afternoon, and she had stopped within a few minutes of six. She had kept time with a vengeance! She had wasted none! But I—I was, as usual, just half an hour too late!

XVI.

I MAY well say so. Rocket had grown impatient at my non-appearance, and some casual remark from the acting friend of Walton had so chafed him, that he remembered that he too had a claim upon that gentleman. He silenced the cavilling second very soon, and after a fashion of his own.

"We are ready, sir, if you please. Your complaint is misplaced, and quite unnecessary. Some difficulty—we know not what—delays my principal—but I am here, not only to serve him as second, but, if need be, to fill his place."

"Oh, no necessity for that, Major Rocket. We will willingly wait a while," said the other, in a conciliatory manner.

"To be sure we will wait," said Rocket, in reply; "but we will not wait idly. Let us to business. Your principal will recollect that I have a small claim on his regards, which I purposed, through motives of friendship, to waive in behalf of Mr. Topic, as I esteemed his injuries to be more serious than mine. Whether they were or not, however, matters little. As he does not appear,

ne cannot reasonably complain, sir, if I put his business aside for a moment, and pay some little attention to my own. With your leave, therefore, Lieutenant Thompson, I will take my position, and you will place your friend. Your eye and hand to pistols and position will satisfy me—the distance I also leave with you, and will only, with your permission, reserve to myself the word, as I am not accustomed to the peculiar tone of your voice."

"But, my dear Major Rocket," said Thompson, "my friend has no affair with you."

"I have with him, Lieutenant Thompson, if you please," was the cool response.

"But, sir, I cannot permit this," said the other.

"Permit what you please, Lieutenant Thompson, you will not suffer your friend to submit to, or provoke, indignity," was the significant response of Rocket.

"Surely not," responded Thompson; "and if you insist upon his fighting you, the claim of course must be allowed, in order that he may avoid and prevent indignity; but you will, at least, before I suffer this matter to go on, inform me of the ground of issue."

"Certainly—nothing more reasonable. Your friend, sir, when I waited upon him on behalf of

Mr. Topic, actually thought to put me aside, and would have proceeded to my principal, but that I placed the matter before him in the most peremptory form. You will understand readily, Lieutenant Thompson, as a gentleman honoured with an epaulet, the necessity of checking and punishing any disparagement of an acting representative in an affair of this nature. The delicacy, Lieutenant Thompson, which should characterize parties to a personal contest, renders this concern our duty."

Thompson was struck with the argument, and acquiesced.

"I am truly sorry—how could Mr. Walton err after this fashion?—but, if you insist, Major Rocket—"

The major simply bowed, looked excruciated, and put his right hand on his left breast, as much as to say,

"It touches me nearly, lieutenant—the thing is unavoidable."

Poor Walton, of course, had not a word to say in all this business. He was utterly silent—in the hands, and at the disposition, of his friend.

The preliminaries were soon arranged—distance seven paces—the word to be given by Major Rocket himself. On this point he explained himself apologetically to Lieutenant Thompson after the follow-

ing manner: the validity of the reason given is scarcely obvious enough.

"My ear is wonderfully nice, Lieutenant Thompson—morbidly nice. A sound, however slight, which is unmusical, I turn from involuntarily—it disturbs—it disquiets me. I have remarked that the louder tones of your voice are rather harsh, and there is a ringing sharpness at the close of your utterance which does not altogether accord with my organs of tune. It would doubtlessly throw me out a little. If you prefer it, however, you may substitute the sign for the sound, and the dropping of your handkerchief will answer the purposes of the word."

Thompson waived the point, however, and Rocket assured him that the words should be spoken in tones at once full, distinct, and harmonious—intelligence, no doubt, highly gratifying to my friend Walton.

"I will not hurt the gentleman seriously, Lieutenant Thompson," said Rocket, complacently—"not seriously, for I cannot forget that in so doing I might prevent the affair from proceeding between our mutual principals—an interruption for which, I fear me, I should not readily receive the forgiveness of either party. I should be loath, certainly,

to interfere in this respect with the contemplated enjoyment of my friend; but I owe it to myself, Lieutenant Thompson, to wing Mr. Walton, at least, though I shall be careful not to trouble his pistol-arm."

"Do your best, Major Rocket," said the other, somewhat proudly; "I shall instruct my principal not to trouble his aim with any such nice considerations."

"That is right, sir—you are kind. I am in place; and, whenever you tell me that your friend is ready, I shall be bound instantly to solicit his fire."

The day was cloudy, and there was no necessity to choose ground with any reference to the sunlight. This matter was soon settled, and it was signified to Rocket that he might give the word as soon as he thought proper. His tones were indeed musical, and were not well articulated before the ball of Walton went through the lapel of his waistcoat.

"Rather a good shot for a level, but not so well for a line," was the calm remark of Rocket, whose bullet at the same instant inflicted a flesh-wound upon the left arm of his opponent—a wound which he studiously took care should be a slight one.

"You are satisfied, Major Rocket?" was the inquiry of Thompson.

"For myself—yes. The privilege of a second shot lies with your friend, *par courtesie.*"

This was waived, and the affair had been just settled when I came upon the ground.

XVII.

And now came my turn. There was no getting off; and, evidently dissatisfied with my delay in coming, yet delighted that he was not to be altogether disappointed in his desire for sport, Major Rocket proceeded to make his arrangements, in concert with Thompson, for the proper progress of the affair. Meanwhile, Walton and myself stood eying each other with great coolness and civility at a little distance. We had exchanged bows, and there was to be no more communication between us till our exchange of shots. While I looked upon him my heart relented. How long had we been close friends! How intimately associated!—in how many boyish frolics!—in how many youthful pleasures! Was I now, in reality, the seeker of his blood? My conscience smote me with the reflection. I had no sort of enmity

against him—no ill feeling. I could not convince myself that he had played me unfairly in the matter of my courtship and his own. But, then, the public thought so—the wise, the discriminating, the nice, all-judging, unobtrusive public—they thought my injuries enormous, and clamoured lustily that I should have redress. The newspaper editors also cried aloud with a mighty voice, though I well knew that, if I shot my man, they would, the very next day, denounce me as a murderer, and invoke the mob for my punishment. This public opinion is a strange thing. It is something beyond the laws—expected to redress where the laws cannot, and yet, when public opinion becomes public action, which it is very apt to do, and the mob pulls down the monster, what an outcry is then made by the journalists. How they exhort, and chide, and lament. What homilies do they put forth for months after. But, all on a sudden—let their rulers offend them, or let their laws offend them, then they call once more upon the same public opinion to put itself in action, raise its vigorous hammer, destroy the tyrant, and ridicule the laws into nullity. Sweet journalists—wise public opinion—gentle mob! But Major Rocket waits.

XVIII.

"MAJOR, take a peach," I said, taking half a dozen from my pocket, and offering them to that personage.

"I thank you, Mr. Topic; but I never permit myself to eat fruit in cloudy weather. Fruit is always unwholesome in a humid atmosphere; and the digestive organs, at such a period, seldom do their duty properly. Fruit, sir, let me say to you, is only to be eaten in daylight and sunshine. It is unwholesome at all other periods."

"We are ready, Major Rocket," said Thompson.

"Pardon me, sir; I take shame to myself that the intimation did not come from us," said Rocket, with an air of chivalric mortification. Continuing, he turned to me with his final directions.

"Remember, Mr. Topic, the word and line are every thing. With the utterance of the one make sure of the other, and all is right. D——n your mere levels in pistol shooting."

We were placed, and in waiting for the word. The weather suddenly grew uncomfortably warm. I never experienced a greater change. I looked

at Walton, and his pistol muzzle had been enlarged to the size of a twenty-four-pounder's, and covered every possible inch of my body. He, too, seemed to have undergone a most unnatural change. He now looked as red and fierce as a salamander. I began to feel very uncomfortable, when the word—an awful sound—was given, and we both elevated our weapons. Old thoughts inspired me as I did so; and though, in that first and only glance which I then took of my pistol and of my enemy, I had dead aim in a certain line upon his bosom, I yet felt forgiveness and ancient friendship come over me like a heavy and rebuking cloud, and I purposely varied the range of the weapon, and spared his life. His bullet went wide; and Rocket saw that I had thrown mine away. He was about to expostulate with me as he approached, but was interrupted in his remarks in a manner exceedingly distressing to him. Nature was not to be withstood nor mistaken. As if by a natural instinct, the moment after our shots had been exchanged, both Walton and myself threw down our weapons, and, without a word, we rushed into each other's arms.

XIX.

ROCKET was aghast! What a violation of decorum—of propriety—of all rule and practice.

"Mr. Topic!" exclaimed the major.

"Mr. Walton!" exclaimed Thompson, who was also something of a martinet.

"What have you done, gentlemen?" was the cry from both.

We justified, or sought to justify, ourselves.

"But public opinion, gentlemen—" said Thompson.

"D——n public opinion!" cried Walton.

"Really, Mr. Topic," said Rocket, "this is a melancholy departure from the laws of honour. It will awaken the indignation of all honourable men from Maine to Mexico. What will the world say?"

"Ay, what will the world say?" said Thompson, in echo.

"What an example to future ages!" said Rocket.

"There will be no redress against indignity and outrage!" said Thompson.

"Certainly, there will be no need of practice," said Rocket; "and really, Lieutenant Thompson, to leave the field without some little serious injury,

is only to seem like triflers. This is a melancholy business; it does look childish in the extreme. Suppose—"

He paused, and twirled the handle of his pistol with a feverish anxiety.

"Suppose what, Major Rocket?" inquired Thompson, civilly.

"I was thinking—the fact is, Mr. Thompson, all Chestnut-street will laugh at this business. So much for befriending the sons of Quakers. It is highly discreditable. Suppose—"

He again paused for a few seconds. Thompson looked blank and anxious, but said nothing. Rocket proceeded.

"Pardon me: I would have given you the opportunity of making this suggestion, but as—through like feelings of delicacy, I presume—you have also forborne, you will pardon me for thus taking the word."

"Proceed, major," courteously responded the other.

"Suppose then, sir, that we take the places which these gentlemen have left. A single shot will be all that we shall require, in order to give a dignified aspect to our meeting. It will otherwise seem to have been a mere bravado—a boyish,

braggartly proceeding, which would be shockingly annoying."

Thompson was phlegmatic. He was willing to assist in getting his neighbour shot at, but was minded quite too philosophically to feel desirous of incurring any such idle risk himself. He declined the invitation with some rapidity. Rocket put away his pistols in great chagrin, and much did he declaim about the decline of chivalry in the land. Meanwhile, Walton asked us all to sup with him and his new wife that night. Thompson and myself readily accepted, though I felt exceedingly disquieted at the idea of seeing Emily as the wife of anybody but myself. It was too late now, however, to give my thoughts to this matter, and I resolved to bear with my privation, and behold his joys with as little anxiety and envy as possible.

Rocket did not so readily reply to the invitation. He had a condition preliminary; and this was, that no manner of reference should be made by either of us to the affair, which, in his notion, had terminated so unhappily. In particular, he begged that, should it be spoken of by the public, no reference should be made to him as the acting or even present friend of either party.

"It would be very unpleasant," said he, "to be

spoken of as the friend and second of one who could cut a bamboo, yet throws away his lead. Pardon me, Mr. Walton,—I have no hostility to you, believe me; but public opinion required that Mr. Topic should at least have winged you; and I am doubtful if it will not say that he should have blown out your brains."

"Thank you," said Walton, kindly, in reply. "But will you sup with us, major?"

"Do you accept my conditions?" was the response.

"We do—we do—most heartily. We shall be as secret as mice on the subject for our own sakes. The matter would not tell so readily in favour of either of us."

"You are right, Mr. Walton," said Rocket, gravely. "You sup, you say, at nine. I will come. Pray have a steak for me—rarely done—with a sauce of the gum fœtida. I shall be a little out of spirits, I fear,—this cloudy weather, and the disappointment—and—excuse me, sir, but I will come."

Rocket gave me a seat with him, and we all set off at the same time for home. At night we met again at Walton's, where we saw, and where I looked, with no small philosophy, upon my Emily as another man's wife. The most wonderful point

of all was that, on this occasion, I did not come too late. I was punctual to the appointed moment. Emily raised her finger at me—why?—perhaps because I did not come to the wedding. Poor thing—she was happy—according to her notion. Would she have been so, think you, if she had only known what had been my intentions? She had been just as much too precipitate for her happiness, as I was, possibly, too late for mine.

CHATELARD, THE POET.

A PASSAGE FROM HISTORY.

"'Tis madness thus to love in recklessness
Of shame and danger; greater madness still,
To love, nor hope, that, with a sweet distress,
We may the gentle heart we worship fill—
Such love must madden always, often kill;
And its sad memory down the seas of time
Shall rush, a warning terror to the will
By reason unsubdued, and warp'd to crime,
A mock to those that hate, to those who love, sublime."

S

CHATELARD, THE POET.

I.

The madness of love, its desperate devotion, in spite of reason and against hope, is a frequent subject with the poets. One of the most melancholy instances of this madness is that given of the poet Chatelard, who, like many others, though without the same good-fortune, became enamoured of that most winning of beauties and least sovereign of queens, Mary Stuart. The account which history gives us of this daring and most unhappy adventurer, possesses quite as much interest, and is no less sadly romantic, than that of Rizzio; who, with far less pretension, and, perhaps, with a greater degree of justice, suffered a like punishment for a like error. One difference existed, however, between their respective cases; rendering that of Rizzio far less intolerable than that of Chatelard. The hand of Mary, the beloved one, sought to arrest the knife of the assassin when aimed at the bosom of the

Italian. The gallant Frenchman had no such sympathy from her he so much adored. If she did not wish his death, she did not seek, perhaps she did not dare, to arrest it. She gave him up to the cold, slow hands of the executioner, and the poet knew not that in her heart she would have saved, and still continued to preserve him.

II.

THE first notice which we have of Chatelard places him on board the vessel which bore Mary of Scotland from *La Belle France* to the unstable empire in which she was destined not to reign, but to endure. The events of that voyage do not need, in this place, any particular recital. We are told by the historians, who have dwelt upon this point of Mary's life with much more precision than distinguishes their narrative throughout, that, with a measure of grief, which, to most persons, would appear highly exaggerated and artificial, "*La Reine Blanche*,"—as, from her white mourning, the French at that time designated her—took her departure from the shores of that fair country, in which her education had been acquired, and which her heart could never, at any period in her life, en-

tirely leave. Nor was this feeling at all abated by the other circumstances attending her departure. Various and striking were the omens of ill which marked her sailing, and filled her melancholy spirit with apprehensions not unwarranted by the result; and, when advised of the English fleet sent by her bitter enemy and rival, Elizabeth, to intercept her, not even the pledges of true faith from her gallant but small retinue could materially diminish or alter the countenance of despair, with which, uttering a thousand exclamations of "farewell!" all the while she kept looking back upon the land which her eyes were so rapidly losing. The strains of the young Chatelard, served up to her senses with a spirit of corresponding tone with hers, soothed, however, the gloomy temper of the princess, and possibly prevented those wild and violent paroxysms which usually mark the more extravagant sorrows of the sex. In nature's exhaustion at last, weeping herself to slumber, she sank down upon the couch prepared for her upon the deck of her vessel; while, with a spirit more and more enamoured from the subject of his contemplation, the daring youth who sang above her, filled with hopes as delightful as they were illusory, fell into dreams

not less cheering than those of his mistress were sorrowful.

III.

The dawn of the morning found them in the most perilous situation. They were surrounded by the English fleet, and no possible chances appeared for their escape. In that hour the devotion of those about the beleaguered princess was finely tried; and none were more ready in their willingness to die in her defence than the young and accomplished poet. Indeed, as the nephew of the celebrated Bayard, the knight *sans peur, sans reproche*—educated in France, skilled in arts, arms, and the required duties of a court the most refined of Europe—less than devotion to death, and firmness amid torture, could not have been expected from the youth. His eyes flashed defiance as the tall masts of the approaching and overwhelming force loomed out upon the horizon; and, throwing aside the harp, to the strains of which through the night his fine voice had formed at intervals a fitting accompaniment, he drew his sword, and bending on his knee to his queen, proffered it in gallant language, and begged to use it in her service. Mary

smiled through her tears upon the poet, and, with a compliment which came with added sweetness from her lips, gave him permission—a permission which made him happy—to die in her defence. But the watchful Providence had them in charge, and in the moment of their discovery of the enemy, a thick fog overspread the seas. A bold hand was upon the helm; and, guided unwaveringly and silently upon their course, they escaped, by passing through the scattered prows of the English.

IV.

Mary reached Scotland in safety, and ascended her precarious throne. The rejoicings which hailed her approach concealed the dangers from her eye, at first, which were destined to beset her progress for ever after. She received the incense of popular adulation as a thing familiar; and if she became at any time intoxicated by her triumphs—which seems questionable—she at least did not readily forget her old friends and the companions of her voyage, who pledged themselves so gallantly to her service in the moment of peril. Chatelard continued a favourite, and few men ever possessed more happily the power of maintain-

ing that ground in the estimation of the queen which his many accomplishments and warm devotion to her service had long before won. Amid opposing claims he suffered nothing from rivalship; and while other courtiers were exposed to the alternations of a cloudy day, all was sunshine and smiles for him. A poetess herself, Mary delighted in all those professing the gay science; and though we have few remains of Chatelard by which his pretensions might be estimated, it appears, from her regard, that his claims were at once agreeable and peculiar. He wrote in all living languages. He read with a voice and manner that improved what he read. He was ready and fluent in composition, and her smiles so encouraged him, that, at length, she herself became his muse, and he learned in a little time to forget all others. Nor was his daring unsanctioned by the circumstances attending it. She seemed, perhaps unconsciously, to encourage his madness. She replied to his verses in a strain equally amatory; and the rapt bard forgot entirely his poetical existence in the feelings of the man. Accustomed to every species of adulation, the tender verses of Chatelard did not offend the young princess; and she smiled at his more extravagant flights, as at the flatteries peculiar to, and pardon-

able in, the poet. But her condescension was fatal to the lover. "Her smiles tempted him," says Brantome, "to aspire, like Phæton, at ascending the chariot of the sun." He grew mad in his hope; and, thinking of little beside, and caring for nothing else, the youth had no life but in the wild love which he entertained for his sovereign.

V.

It was at the close of one of those evenings which Mary, freeing herself from the council and the counsellors alike, usually reserved to herself, her "four Maries," and such other of her household as were classed with her especial favourites—that Chatelard, while performing to the queen, had drunk in his richest draughts of delicious enjoyment. Though always gentle and indulgent, she had been to the young poet on this occasion particularly so; and there was that in his heart which could not, and would not, be controlled. He had just sung the words of a new poem, in which, as usual, her praises had been imbodied; the conceits of which, borrowed in part from the Italian, had won largely upon her admiration. The "four Maries," not so fond as their mistress of the divine

art, had, one by one, fallen into that species of torpor which, if not sleep, is wonderfully like it, and which comes not unusually to those kept long in attendance upon a superior. The queen had not ceased in her admiration, when the fertile genius of the poet suggested a still richer conceit, which his lips soon carried into song, and which at once called for another warm acknowledgment from the gratified and royal listener. She was herself a poet, and no enjoyment seemed to her half so delightful, at any time, as that of poetry. From strain to strain, each unlike the other, yet all teeming with the same rich, pleasant burden of love, he hurried on, with fond and feverish rapidity, until fancy grew absorbed in feeling, and his own genius failed to inspire him longer on a subject which he so deeply and seriously felt. It was not possible for him longer to feign and think the flame which was burning in his soul. Still unwearied, as a listener, she called upon him to continue, and the muse of the Frenchman was compelled to resort to the stores of an English poet. A lay, but recently published, of Ben Jonson, a favourite song with Mary, which, in some parts, she had altered, was suggested by the queen herself; and the bard, as it spoke truly the adoration

which he felt for the lovely auditor, unhesitatingly complied with a requisition which enabled him, though in the language of another, to speak forth his own passion aloud, as a minstrel, which he dared not utter as a man.

MADRIGAL.

I.

Look on her eyes—they light
  All that love's world compriseth;
Look on her brow—'tis bright
  As love's star when it riseth;—
Mark her face—it is fair,
  The opening heavens not more so;
Mark the soul in her air,
  And wonder not I adore so.

II.

Saw you the lily grow,
  Before rude hands have touch'd it?—
Saw you the driven snow,
  Before the soil hath smutch'd it?—
Felt you the fur of the beaver,
  Tasted the bag of the bee,
Or look'd on the swan's down ever?
  Far softer and sweeter is she.

The strain delighted her always, and particularly now, when the action, voice, look, and general manner of Chatelard, made the tribute more personal, and therefore more grateful to her vanity. Roused at length by his inspiration and her own feeling, she caught from him a portion of its influence, seized the harp, which she bade him place

beside her, and sung, with great tenderness and much effect, a little response to his strains; in which, with a like conceit, she requited him for his labour.

The words which she uttered were those of love—of deep feeling—and though, most probably, dictated only in that spirit of compliment and gallantry which distinguished the age, in that country in which both of them had been educated, the adventurous poet regarded them as reciprocating, in every essential, the mad passion of his own spirit. Falling upon his knee, therefore, he seized her hand, and fervently carrying it to his lips, perceived, with renewed delight, that she did not rebuke him—that she allowed him to retain it, though for a few moments only, and only did not permit a repetition of his offence. He spoke to her with a soul which infused itself into every syllable which gathered upon his lips. What he said he himself knew not. His heart was wild, and all his senses in rebellion against his reason. He breathed forth the adoration which he felt, and only offended when, in the simplicity of his spirit, he dared to hope.

VI.

THE queen rose, and for a moment she spoke not. There was something of a sweet confusion in her eye which gave a moment's encouragement to the rash and enamoured minstrel. It is not impossible, indeed, that, young, ardent, gentle, highly intellectual, having a spirit attuned, like his who addressed her, to the high converse of the muse, and warmed to corresponding sympathies, the pretension of the bard had been far less heinous in her mind than, under other circumstances, it might have appeared. Her manner was not stern, though grave; and her accents, though not encouraging, were neither frigid nor severe. Looking around upon her attendants, who had, without much difficulty, worked themselves into the profoundest sleep, with resumed calmness she spoke to the still kneeling and still entreating youth. His fine and graceful figure—his wild, penetrating, and impassioned eye—the free and bold gesture of his action—the eloquence of his language—the warmth of his love—were all so many advocates, not merely for forgiveness, but for a corresponding love. That, in a less elevated station, Mary of Scotland

voice of a people, or the rights of inheritance, have invested with power, that the soul of Chatelard regards the person of Mary Stuart. It is not the bawble of sovereignty and vain sway which I have adored—it is not these which have dazzled my eyes and misled my spirit. I have not been won away from my fealty by such as these; and I regarded you, my princess, as too far above the sex to which you by nature belong, to have much regarded them yourself. I know that you esteem not royalty as the silly crowd who gather in its blaze. I have not watched and lingered when all were gone, and loved devotedly when all were hollow and insincere, to doubt that your soul was as much above the vain trappings of your state, as mine that dared, and still dares, to despise them. And how shall we regard those toys of human arrangement which make the free spirit a reined and fettered thing, and would enslave and bind affections and high passions according to chartered limits? I have not cared—I shall not care—for such restraints, and well I am assured that you are beyond their dictation and control. If you are not —if, with that frailty which the familiar speech of old time hath laid to your sex, you have deceived me in this,—I have indeed, and deeply, offended.

But I will not thus imagine. I dare not think, my princess, that a spirit so finely wrought as yours can find a difference in the state with which human laws hedge round authority, giving it superiority over a mind and affections, having no consciousness of aught by which it might suffer in a comparison with authority of the highest."

"And granting, young man, that I thought as you suppose. Granting that, in my mind, there was nothing in the state itself which should prevent a queen from bestowing herself on the meanest of her subjects who had found favour in her sight—by what art come you to know that such a one are you? What divination provides you with this goodly assurance? Why hast thou taken it for true, that, having such a free doctrine as that thou hast so plainly imagined, I have chosen to illustrate it to my subjects, with your aid in especial?"

The mortification of the poet he did not seek to suppress. As the queen spoke, the colour came and went on his cheeks, and as his words were uttered in reply, they fell from his lips tremulously and only with great effort.

"Sharply, my sovereign, have you rebuked my folly; but my pride in this suffers far less than the

voice of a people, or the rights of inheritance, have invested with power, that the soul of Chatelard regards the person of Mary Stuart. It is not the bawble of sovereignty and vain sway which I have adored—it is not these which have dazzled my eyes and misled my spirit. I have not been won away from my fealty by such as these; and I regarded you, my princess, as too far above the sex to which you by nature belong, to have much regarded them yourself. I know that you esteem not royalty as the silly crowd who gather in its blaze. I have not watched and lingered when all were gone, and loved devotedly when all were hollow and insincere, to doubt that your soul was as much above the vain trappings of your state, as mine that dared, and still dares, to despise them. And how shall we regard those toys of human arrangement which make the free spirit a reined and fettered thing, and would enslave and bind affections and high passions according to chartered limits? I have not cared—I shall not care—for such restraints, and well I am assured that you are beyond their dictation and control. If you are not —if, with that frailty which the familiar speech of old time hath laid to your sex, you have deceived me in this,—I have indeed, and deeply, offended.

But I will not thus imagine. I dare not think, my princess, that a spirit so finely wrought as yours can find a difference in the state with which human laws hedge round authority, giving it superiority over a mind and affections, having no consciousness of aught by which it might suffer in a comparison with authority of the highest."

"And granting, young man, that I thought as you suppose. Granting that, in my mind, there was nothing in the state itself which should prevent a queen from bestowing herself on the meanest of her subjects who had found favour in her sight—by what art come you to know that such a one are you? What divination provides you with this goodly assurance? Why hast thou taken it for true, that, having such a free doctrine as that thou hast so plainly imagined, I have chosen to illustrate it to my subjects, with your aid in especial?"

The mortification of the poet he did not seek to suppress. As the queen spoke, the colour came and went on his cheeks, and as his words were uttered in reply, they fell from his lips tremulously and only with great effort.

"Sharply, my sovereign, have you rebuked my folly; but my pride in this suffers far less than the

poor heart in which it abides. It has been my thought, that there were some spirits made as sovereign by nature as they are so by human creation; and my farther thought has been, that such a spirit was thine. Nor can I yet think otherwise, though thou hast chosen to reprove me for my wild love, not as it offends thy own nature, but as it ill accords with the wonted usage of that vain state with which the pageantry of ancient folly hath girded thee in. I love thee not less, however, even now, hopeless as thou hast declared my passion to be, and all humbled as thou hast endeavoured to make that pride, which, till this hour—assured as it has been of no semblance of aught that was not high and honourable—was never humbled before man—nor, whatever be my fate, can I cease to make the same bold, and, as it appears to thee, most audacious and offensive avowal. I cannot school the nature which I have from Heaven to its own violation because of any earthly dictation. If it be criminal to love thee, I am thus criminal; and I fear me, if I know myself rightly, that each future hour of my life will somewhat increase the crime for which the heavy penalty of your stern frown and bitter speech is now gathering in its reproof."

"You are bold, Chatelard—over bold, to your

queen; and, but that I deem you the honest subject that you have always appeared, and now avow yourself, I should be something more than offended. I forgive you this boldness, and think not when I warn you to greater prudence, and chide you for the forwardness of present speech, that I overlook and am insensible to those gifts of nature and of art which so present themselves in you, and make you, as I have often said and thought, one of the fairest gentlemen of my court. I am well delighted with your skill in the divine art of poetry, and would be loath to lose that sweet minstrelsy which hath soothed so many of my saddest hours, and which thy skill so cunningly awakens. But thou must be chary of thy speech and thoughts in this foolish matter, of which thou hast permitted thy lips to prattle something too freely. Thou hast marked the jealous scrutiny of those who, calling themselves my subjects, are yet my sovereigns, and whom I dare not offend. Thou hast seen for thyself the malignant spirit with which this gross zealot, whom they call Knox, inveterately watches over and vapours at all that concerns me. Pursue not, therefore, this madness; for, whatever my woman heart might teach, my calm reason assures me it is nothing less,—and be as thou hast been

heretofore, and as I have been glad to behold thee, the noble friend rather than the subject; and make me not less, by thy future bearing, than thy good friend, as I ever would be."

VII.

THE manner of the queen was even more gentle than her words, but the parental character of both was thrown away upon the infatuated poet. At the close of their dialogue, however, he obeyed her order to withdraw, and now left her to her devotions prior to retiring for the night. A little recess in an adjoining chamber, a richly-curtained and snug apartment, was appropriated for this purpose; and but a few moments had elapsed from the departure of Chatelard when Mary was upon her knees before a lovely image of the Virgin. She was interrupted in her devotions, which we may well suppose had been resorted to immediately upon the departure of the daring poet, to counteract the enkindled feelings in her own susceptible bosom. Chatelard had been unsuccessful in the effort to control his own. He had not duly estimated the firmness or the prudence of Mary, and was mad enough to conceive the indulgent character of her

reply to him, on dismissing him for the night, as in reality a full sanction, rather than a rebuke, of his passion. He re-entered the chamber, hurried by the maids of honour, still sleeping, and,—with a rashness to be accounted for only by a supposition of insanity, and only to be excused as it sprang from that passion, which is supposed, possibly from its general scarcity, to carry with it, whenever it appears, its own redeeming apology—he penetrated the sanctuary of prayer and privacy. A word—a passionate word—a gust of passionate words—came from his lips, as, sinking down beside the kneeling Mary, he clasped her in his arms, and imprinted a burning kiss upon her lips. The maids of honour, awakened by her cries, came to her rescue. The queen retired to her chamber, and Chatelard was about to leave the little anteroom in which this scene had taken place, when a strong arm was laid upon his shoulder, and the regent, Murray, stood before him. The poet was as fearless in strife as he was daring in love; but resistance was hopeless. A score of serving-men were at the back of the earl, by whom he was immediately taken into custody, and that very night committed to a close prison.

VIII.

The trial of Chatelard, by the proper legal authorities, followed in due and rapid course, under the direction of the regal council. The great favour which the poet had enjoyed, had procured for him many enemies; and the jealous hate of Murray, against all and every thing that stood for an instant between himself and the supreme rule, which he always desired, and at that time almost affected, furnished a spur, on this occasion, to the active measures which were adopted. The trial was soon had, and the misguided youth was condemned to death. The gentle spirit of Mary revolted when this sentence was delivered. She laboured, though vainly, for its commutation; and the stern temper of that stern people, or many among them, over whom she reigned, set down the interest and sympathy which she now exhibited to the worst of all criminal attachments. As, with tears in her eyes, and an eloquence not often surpassed even among men, she rose in the council, if possible, to affect the decision by her own entreaties, and the unhesitating forgiveness which she offered to the condemned poet, the rigid reformer,

Knox, throwing aside all sense of propriety, presumed to insinuate a guilty interest in her prayer for the prisoner's life which did not exist, and never had existed. It was then that—as the queen, disdaining all reply, sank back, pained and exhausted, upon the cushions from which she had risen—the victim, for the first time, rose to address the council.

"I do not speak," said he, "that I may not perish. I am guilty of all that you allege; and, since I may not dare to *live*, why should I fear to die? I have no fears of death; and, at this moment, but little love of life. But for that malignant slanderer, who, not daring to speak out his malice, yet meanly leaves it to the sense of conjecture,—I would speak to his shame. It is false, as he affirms it. I am the criminal in this—the only criminal—if it be a crime to love—and with adoration not less warmly, though perhaps less acceptably offered, than that which I have entertained for Heaven. Let me," said he, turning to the queen, "let me, oh, most beautiful and well-beloved princess, do this atonement for my offence to you. It is but meager justice to your heavenly innocence, that I say to this people who now sit over me in judgment, that my rash passion was no

less ungracious in your eyes than it has proved criminal in theirs. This, indeed, is my sorrow—since the chains with which they have loaded these once free and undishonoured limbs, and the insolent speech and suspicion which they have poured into these ears, that had hitherto refused to hearken to any sounds that were not noble and sweet—and the ignominious death which is in reserve for me—would all have been as nothing—ay, would have been sought for earnestly and anxiously, as a rich boon and blessing, so that thou hadst felt some of that wild passion in thy breast which thou hast so fatally awakened in mine."

IX.

With a refinement of cruelty, which seems to have attended Mary through life, she was compelled to sit in a latticed chamber overlooking the place of the poet's execution. This measure was deemed necessary, in order the more fully to exonerate her from the suspicion urged by her enemies, that, having first tempted, she had afterward betrayed, the criminal. It was thought necessary that she should seem to rejoice in his just punishment. The unfortunate youth was brought to

execution on the 22d February, 1653. His conduct on the altar of death and degradation was marked by the most enthusiastic bravery. He rejected the aid of the confessor; and, having first read aloud Ronsard's celebrated Hymn on Death, he turned to the chamber, through the lattice of which the outline of the queen's form might be seen imperfectly, and, after a moment's pause, exclaiming, "Farewell, loveliest and most cruel princess that the world contains"—knelt firmly and gracefully down before the block. A single shriek from the window announced the moment of execution; and the queen fell into a swooning fit as the dismembered head rolled from the gory trunk along the scaffold.

JUAN PONCE DE LEON.

"Now, would you hear a story of true love,
True as a village legend, and as long?—
Sit down—be patient—hearken and be sad,
And look you have your 'kerchief. 'Tis a tale
Will take a plentiful tribute of your tears."

JUAN PONCE DE LEON.

I.

The lover of Spanish story is not likely to forget that of John Ponce of Leon. The American reader should not be ignorant on the subject. The narrative has charmed the one often and over; it should be no less familiar, even if less charming, to the other. His story is a rich one for the romancer—the moralist may also gather no little for "grave saw" and sage apothegm from its consideration. His narrative,—the boldness of his achievements, in Old and New Spain alike, have won for him no small share of that renown which, at one period, the Spanish cavaliers seemed to have divided among themselves to the exclusion of all other nations. To those who are at all conversant with the stirring period in which he lived, there is no danger of that oblivion, in his case, which has shadowed the greatness of so many of his contemporaries. Irving, with a pen that charms wherever it touches, has furnished us with a very pleas-

ant and interesting sketch of his life, the perusal of which will amply compensate for the idle hour which it employs; and, though differing greatly from that distinguished writer in his estimate of the *character* of the Spanish adventurers, who seem to us to have been a pack of the greatest scoundrels that ever lived, we are not unwilling to derive our interest from a source from which we never hope to gather many lessons.

Ponce de Leon, like Basco Nunez, was rather a better gentleman than the greater number of his neighbours. He was neither so brutal nor so reckless as the rest, though quite as great a rogue; and, as a knight of romance, we find him fulfilling, to the card, all the dues and duties of the courts and codes of chivalry in its most elevated periods. He was a cavalier after the best fashion, and did no discredit to his order. He was brave and daring to a proverb—strong in person, fiery in spirit—true to his affections—earnest in his devotions—a lover of valorous deeds for valour's sake, and fond of the sex, as became a distinguished disciple in the schools of that gallantry which made woman a goddess or a creature, according to the fancy and caprice of a most unprincipled order, whom a long period of warfare had made vi-

cious and licentious to the last degree. It may not be necessary, however, to dwell longer upon this head; for, I take it, these things are quite as well known to my readers as to myself. I only propose to tell them what Irving has omitted, and which they could not so readily have hunted up for themselves.

II.

THE wars of Granada had now for some time been over—the Moors expelled for ever the delicious country in which their elysium had, perhaps, been quite too much entertained; and but for the strife and wild adventure which followed the unveilment of the New World to European eyes, the whole kingdom of Spain would have fallen into a most unseemly, and, at that period, unnatural and unbecoming quiet. The hum and hurry of war had ceased to keep awake the cities; and the spirit-stirring blast of the trumpet gave way at nightfall to the gentle, and more delicate, and seductive notes of the guitar—

> "At evening, by some melancholy maid,
> To silver waters."

Knighthood, if not positively unfashionable, be-

gan to be somewhat cumbersome, at least; and, if the coat of mail did here and there continue to be worn by the warrior more solicitous of former than of present times, it was not unfrequently concealed by the vestment of gorgeous and embroidered silk. In fact, the entire nation, even at the moment of its greatest glory and true regeneration, had begun to adopt that peculiar languor of habit, the consequence of a sudden flood of prosperous enterprise, which, in after times, when a superabundant wealth provided them with the means of a boundless and luxurious indulgence, has made them a very by-word and a mockery among the nations. This condition of the national character was not then perceptible, however; certainly not to themselves, and perhaps not to the surrounding powers; and the repose in which the nation lay had become particularly irksome to those brave adventurers who looked to carve out their fortunes with their weapons. "The world was their oyster;" and with them the thought, if not the speech, of ancient Pistol, must have been of favourite and frequent application. Peace was not only inglorious, but unprofitable; and the discovery of America was a Godsend quite as necessary to the kingdom of Old Spain, in ridding it of the excess and idle

population made by the sudden termination of its protracted warfare, as in extending its dominions and increasing its treasures.

Though fully as renowned as any of the brave spirits of his age and country for every accomplishment of arms, and every requisite of adventure, Ponce de Leon did not, however, at this time, take part in the new crusade for the conquest of the Indian regions. There were, indeed, sundry good and sufficient reasons why such a step would be unnecessary, and might have been imprudent. Ponce was now getting rather old—he had been fighting the good fight for his king and his faith, from boyhood up, against the infidels, and quite long enough to render unquestionable his loyalty to both. Beyond all this, however—although we shame to say it of so brave a knight, yet the truth had better be known than not—Ponce had of late suffered some strange sensations of weakness in regard to a certain capricious damsel, the daughter and only heir of a neighbouring Castellan—or, as it now runs, Castilian—a knight of the noblest stock, who could, without any interregnum, trace his genealogical tree, in all its branches, from a time equally beyond man's memory and the deluge. Some may find, also, a sufficiently good reason for

the supineness of our hero in the fact of his being now well to do in the world. He had been any thing but a loser in the wars; had been at the sacking of not a few among the Moorish cities: and the spoils thus acquired had been well employed, and with no sparing hand, to enrich and adorn a couple of fine castles on the marches, which the liberality and favour of the queen had committed to his keeping. These, perhaps, were each and all of them strong enough, as reasons, why he should not any more adventure his life for gain or glory. But his amour, his new passion—the feeling which swallowed up all others—had got completely the better of the knight's understanding; and he did nothing but think, talk, and dream, from morning till night, and night till morning, of the beautiful but capricious Leonora D'Alvarado. It was a "gone case" with Don Ponce; and he now had more barbers and friseurs in his pay than he ever knew in his young days, or should have known in his old. But all in vain—the loves of our knight were unfortunate—the course of true love did not run smoothly with him. Leonora was quite too young, beautiful, and wealthy, not to be most fashionable, and most fashionably capricious and coquettish. She laughed at the old knight,

made merry with his awkwardnesses, ridiculed his gallantries, which, indeed, did not sit particularly well upon him; and, with much hardness of heart, denied him her attention whenever he sought to be very manifest with his. She was a gay and wild creature; and with so much grace and winningness did she play the despot, that, while the old knight absolutely shrunk and trembled beneath her frown, he loved still more the tyrant, and became still more deeply the victim of the despotism. It was, as we have already remarked, a gone, and, we regret to add, a hopeless case, with our hero. Nor was it with him alone, we do her the justice to say, that the wanton baggage so toyed and trifled. She had a thousand admirers, all of whom she treated and trampled upon in like manner—feeling, and never hesitating to make use of her power, without pause or mercy, till some cut their own throats or the throats of one another, while she, who made all the mischief, cut each of them in turn. No sooner, however, did one array leave the field, than another came into it—such were her attractions—the new-comers destined, however, to experience like treatment, and be driven away in turn by other victims. She was indifferent to the fate so hourly experienced; and many are the epi-

thets of indignation and despairing love which they bestowed upon her; song, sonnet, sigh, and serenade, alike failing to find in her bosom a single accessible or pregnable point; and knight after knight came and saw, and went away hopelessly in his chains.

III.

Don Ponce was not one of those who so readily despair. He had sat down too often before the Moorish castles, from one year's end to the other, not to have acquired certain valuable lessons from patience, which stood him in stead in the present strait; and, looking upon the conquest of the lady in question, and with much correctness of analogy, as not unlike those to which, in the Moorish wars, he had been so well accustomed, he concluded that, though he might be able to do nothing by sudden storm, he certainly could not altogether fail of success in the course of a regular blockade. The indefatigable patience and perseverance of the besieger, he well knew, not unfrequently wore out both these qualities in the besieged; so he sat down before the fair fortress, and regularly commenced his approaches.

Never kept besieging army so excellent a watch. Ponce was, and had been at all times, an excellent general; the Moors had taught him the nature of strategy, and he taught it to his retainers. They knew their duty, and did it. Not a messenger entered the castle of the beleaguered damsel that was not overhauled. He permitted no succour to be thrown into the walls, and the unfortunate waving of a handkerchief from any of the lattices did not fail to bring out the whole array of the beleaguering force, ready to put to death any auxiliar, or arrest any supplies that might be going to the succour of the besieged.

At length, all his outworks having been completed, his own courage roused to the sticking-point, the preparations for a final attack made perfect, and believing that his antagonist would now be willing to listen to reason, our knight sounded a parley, and the fair defender of the fair fortress readily, and without pause or seeming apprehension of any kind, gave him the desired interview.

Nothing, of course, could have been more delightfully pleasant or pacific. The knight, as had been his wont on all great and trying occasions, appeared in full armour; and the damsel, conscious of her true strength and the legitimate weapons of

her sex, wore, Venus-like, her own graces, set off and exquisitely developed by the voluptuous freedom of the Moorish habit.

As there was now no necessity for any farther delay, the preliminaries having been well passed on both sides, our hero began. Half dignity, half despair, he made a desperate exposition of his case. He described his love, its inveteracy and great irritability, in moving language; now in prose, now in verse, and all in the spirit of that artificial period when love wore wings and worshipped sunbeams, and chivalry carried a lyre in one hand and a lance in the other, ready, in the event of a failure on the part of either, to supply its place with a more faithful auxiliar—for it was not unfrequently the case, that the fair but fickle damsel, having bidden defiance to the persuasive melodies of the first, was borne away triumphantly by the discords and terrors of the last.

Don Ponce was terribly eloquent on the present occasion. Never amorous knight more so. He narrated all his endeavours at her attainment; his labours, more numerous and magnificent than those of Hercules; he detailed at length, and with no little glow in the way of colouring, his various visitations by day, long watchings by night in the

perilous weather; described the curious presents, procured at infinite trouble and expense, solely for her gratification; the thousand and one new songs made purposely in her honour, and at his instance, by the most celebrated minstrels, several dozen of whom he kept in pay solely for the purpose. He then proceeded to describe the honours of his state, his great wealth, substance, dignity, and so forth; and, with all due modesty, he referred to the noise and notoriety of his deeds of arms, and the fame, name, and glory which he had thereby acquired. He dwelt with peculiar force and emphasis upon the nature of the establishment, which, upon marriage, he designed her; and, with much, and in the eye of the maiden, tedious minuteness, entered upon an enumeration at large of the manifold sources of delight and comfort which such an event would necessarily occasion—particularly to her. Having, by this time, exhausted all his *materiel* of speech, he wisely determined upon coming to the point; and, in a fine string of verse prepared for the occasion, and rounding off his speech admirably, as the distich is made to do the scene in the old English drama, he concluded by making her the offer of his hand, heart, and substance, little expecting that, after all said and done, such a young

maiden should still have the hardihood to refuse But so she did. Looking archly in his face for a few seconds, she placed her slender and beautiful fingers upon the few small specks of grizzly hair that still condescended to adorn his temples, and laughingly exclaimed—

"Why, bless me, Don Ponce, at your years, how can you talk of such a matter? You are quite bald, and so wrinkled, that it's wonderful to me how you can possibly think of any thing but your prayers."

This was answer enough, in Heaven's name; and, boiling with indignation, yet full of undiminished ardour and love, the worthy knight hurried home to his castle, immersed and buried in the utmost despair and tribulation.

IV.

The indifference, not to say ill treatment, of Donna Leonora, was not enough, however, to efface from the mind of our hero the many deep impressions which it had imbibed in favour of that capricious beauty. The very sportiveness of her rejection, while it necessarily increased, could not fail, by the seductiveness of her peculiar manner, in

lightening its severity; at least, it gave an added charm to her loveliness in the grace of its expression. He now thought more of the coquettish creature than ever; and the apprehensions—indeed, the now seeming certainty of her loss—threw him into a fever, which was, of course, duly and professionally heightened by the great number of his attending physicians.

The Sangrado principle was at work upon him, and, but that the fates had determined he should be preserved for better things, he had ceased to join in the good cheer of his table, and gone with Polonius, not to eat, but to be eaten! It was on the fourth or fifth day of his malady, history is doubtful which, that, in a moment of interval from pain, his servants brought him intelligence of one below, in the guise of a mariner, who desired sight of his highness, and the royal representative in those parts, the most mighty, and valorous, and wise Don Juan Ponce de Leon, chief of unnumbered titles, and doer of unnumbered deeds, &c. Though not surprised by the application, for Don Ponce was an officer of the king, the knight felt some strange anxieties to see the stranger, for which he could not precisely account; and he did not hesitate, accordingly, to command his appearance.

The new-comer was a Portuguese mariner, seeking permission from the knight, as the king's representative in that section, to make recruits for properly manning his caraval from the province of the knight. He proposed, as was greatly the fashion at that time, to make certain new discoveries on the western continent—the new world which Columbus, a little while before, with unexampled generosity, "gave to Castile and Leon," and which, with still greater generosity, they accepted at his hands In addition, however, to the lands, and savages, and gold, the articles commonly enumerated among the promises of these adventurers, our Portuguese, reviving an old tradition of his people, pledged himself to the discovery of the far-famed fountain, to the waters of which was ascribed the property of conferring perpetual youth upon those who drank of them.

It had long been a prime article in the fancies of the Portuguese, that such a fountain existed somewhere in the Indian seas; and the singular success attending the enterprise of Columbus, at its time of conception regarded as so visionary, now inspired a large degree of credence in every story, however monstrous or extravagant. Our mariner spoke with singular confidence as to the

localities of this fountain, and so very accurately did he describe the features of the spot in which it was to be found, with such a lavish degree of poetical illustration, not to say poetical justice, that, on a sudden, Don Ponce, to the surprise of all about him, who before thought him on his last legs, found himself perfectly restored.

He leaped from his couch, embraced the tarry Portuguese with most unqualified affection; and three or four of his attending physicians happening, most unfortunately for them, at that moment to make their appearance, he gave orders to trundle them from the walls of his castle, in company with all the pills, potions, and purges by which they were usually accompanied; an order, we need not add, almost as soon executed as given. Congratulating himself, with unalloyed pleasure, upon his new acquisition, our hero, to the surprise of everybody, determined upon a voyage of discovery, in proper person, to the newly-found continent.

"I will find these glorious waters, this fountain of youth; I will surprise, I will win this proud lady; I will get rid of this ill-favoured complexion, these trenches, this miserable apology for hair."

Such were the broken exclamations of Don Ponce.

"Where's Don Ponce going?" asked the impertinent.

"What's that to you?" said the knight; and, having made a visit P. P. C., he left the sight of the sneering beauty, entered his vessel, and the sails, under a favouring breeze, loomed out gloriously and auspiciously in a balmy atmosphere, as they bore the old veteran, but young lover, in search of the heretofore hidden fountain of perpetual youth.

V.

YEARS had now rolled away, and the world very well knows, or ought to know, that Don Ponce de Leon, after many mishaps, disasters, and delays, discovered the object of his want and search somewhere in the fertile wildernesses of Florida. It answered all his expectations, and had the desired effect upon his form. He grew, upon drinking from it, straightway comely and strong in person and buoyant in mind: and, though tolerably well supplied with the latter characteristic, being already excessively warm and ardent in his temper and affections, his joints grew more supple than ever, and he could feel his blood articulating in his

veins perpetually, to the tune of the then new and popular, but now old and unpopular *areyto* of "Oh, 'tis love, 'tis love," &c. The stream, however, which caused all this change in the moral and animal man, was quite a small one; and its virtues having soon made themselves manifest, it only served to supply the first comers, and has been dry to all succeeding. A single draught was quite enough for all his purposes; and, perfectly satisfied with the measure of success which attended his adventure, Don Ponce began again to direct his attention to his native country. He thought of his broad, bright fields, and of his vineyards, and his retainers, and his castles; and then he thought of Donna Leonora, and her fields, and her retainers, and her castles, and all her other charms, personal and contingent; and, so thinking, he commenced his return.

But this was no easy matter. He had to fight his way through troops of naked Indians, and wild woods, and wicked briers, and swamps, that left him half naked; now losing his way, and almost despairing to find it again; now exposed to perils from savage men, and to temptations from savage women; such, indeed, as frequently led his chivalry into singular adventures, and nameless and par-

alyzing difficulties. But he surmounted them all; as how, in reference to his new acquisitions, could he do otherwise? He had taken, as it were, a bond from fate for life. The gray hairs had fallen from his brow, and had been succeeded by others of a less equivocal complexion, and in less limited quantity. The wrinkles had left his cheek, the dimness his eye; his step was no longer enfeebled and uncertain; he felt himself quite as young as when, in the vigour of his boyhood, he had wrestled with a romping maid of Andalusia, and was not overthrown.

VI.

He stood once more, after an interval of many years, upon the deck of his caraval; and, as he proceeded over the mighty waste of waters that lay between him and the land of his nativity, his thoughts grew more than ever active and lively—his spirit more anxiously aroused as to the condition in which he should find all things upon his return. His chief apprehension, however, grew out of his affair of the heart. Should the beautiful Leonora have become the bride of another—and was all his personal beauty to be left upon his hands?

This was a damning difficulty, and all in vain did he seek to wrestle with, and to avoid, the reflection. It grew but the stronger as he approached the shore; and when, at his castle's entrance, he put the question to an old retainer, and hastily demanded to know that which his heart yet trembled to learn, how was he rejoiced to hear that all was safe, all as when he had left her, and the capricious damsel quite as open to conviction as ever. He paused at his castle—such was his impatience—but to arrange his habit before intruding himself upon her.

"If," said he, "my gray hairs, my wrinkled face, my infirm gait, were really her objections before, she can no longer entertain them. I will wed her on the spot—she cannot, she dare not, she will not resist me!"

VII.

Thus manfully determined, our hero appeared in the halls of his neighbour Castellan, the father of the lady, and, with a view of present prospects, so likely to become the father of the knight. Their meeting was hearty—it could not well be otherwise, though it took the old gentleman some time

to understand how Don Ponce could get young while he himself got old. The grateful mystery of his transformation once explained, however, and all matters went well afterward. He did not waste more time upon the father than a proper courtesy actually called for; but, the first proprieties over, hurried, with all a lover's agony of impatience, to the bower in which he had been taught to understand his mistress awaited him. What a moment of delightful anticipation—what funds of love in store—what raptures and felicitations at hand! He was on the threshold—he was in the presence. There she stood—the same sylphlike form, the same figure of consummate symmetry. But why veiled? He rushed valiantly forward, fell upon one knee before her, and oh, unlooked-for condescension, she sank into his arms!

He did not hesitate for a moment; but, tearing away the thick folds of the envious veil, he proceeded to impress upon her lips the kiss of a love so fond, so long treasured with a perfect fidelity—when he beheld—not the Leonora he had left—not the beauty of her girlhood—not the creature of exquisite delicacy and youthful fragrance, that queened it over a thousand hearts—but a superannuated and withered damsel, of wrinkled face, starched

features, and lips to which kisses of every kind appeared to have been strangers for a marvellously long season. Don Ponce had never remembered that the term of years employed by him in gaining, was spent by her in losing, both youth and beauty. Nor in this error was our knight alone. To all of us, no changes are so surprising, none certainly so ungracious and painful, as those of the young, and delicate, and gentle, under the hand of time and changing circumstances. Fifteen years had done much for our hero, but much more for our heroine. He could not believe his eyes.

"Nay, lady, there is some mistake here, surely," said he, releasing himself partly from his burden. "I came to see the beautiful Donna Leonora D'Alvarado."

"And I am she, most noble knight—the same Donna Leonora to whom your heart was so perfectly devoted," simpered out the now gracious coquette.

"I must see Don Guzman," said he; "I must learn the facts in this matter;"—and, flying out of the presence of his goddess with far more rapidity than he had ever flown into it, he appeared before the sire of the ancient beauty.

VIII.

"Don Ponce, where are you going?" said the old man.

"Home, Don Guzman," said the young one.

"Why this hurry—does my daughter refuse? If she does, Don Ponce, be assured that in your favour I shall constrain her inclinations," was the warm and friendly decision of Don Guzman.

"Not for the world!" was the reply of our hero, "not for the world; and hark ye, Don Guzman; the truth may as well be said now as at another time. I no longer find your daughter as I left her. I am quite too young for her, I perceive. Pray permit me to send, for her use and your own, a bottle of water, which I took from a certain fountain in India. I can assure you that it will do you both great good—you both stand very much in need of it."

Tradition does not say whether the water thus furnished had any effect upon the fair Leonora. One old chronicle insinuates that she brought her action for a breach of promise against the young knight, but failed to recover. The point is apocryphal, however. He, we know, returned to Amer-

ica, and, after losing an eye in a fight with the Indians, and experiencing many other vicissitudes, died of chagrin, from many disappointments, as well in concerns of ambition as in those of love; "without," says the legend from which we borrow our narration, "without losing a single beauty of that youth so marvellously vouchsafed him by Providence, in the discovery of that wondrous fountain in the wildernesses of Florida."

THE

FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH.

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THE belief which prevailed among the early adventurers of the Portuguese and Spanish nations, that there existed, somewhere among the recesses of the New World, a fountain, the waters of which, when drunk from, had the virtue of giving perpetual youth to those who did so, has been made the subject of frequent story. The late Mr. Sands has given us a beautiful, but imperfect sketch, on the same subject, in his gorgeous romance of "Bimini;" and a modern poet, in a more serious, and, perhaps, more becoming spirit than that which marks the foregoing narrative, has sung recently as follows. The tradition itself is lovely in the extreme, and will, doubtlessly, be one day made available by some high genius, who shall link its golden promise to the richest strains of harmony and romance.—

I.

'Twas a fond dream among the Portuguese,
Those rovers of old ocean, that, afar,
Imbosom'd in the calm of Indian Seas,
And hallow'd by some sweet and singular star,
There murmur'd ever forth a cooling wave,
Whose waters, troubled not by human strife,
By the kind Destinies ordain'd to save,
Bequeath'd, to all who drank, perpetual life.

II.

Nor life alone—that narrow boon of breath,
The nobler spirit learns so soon to scorn—
That profitless flow of years which end in death,
Ere yet the joy they labour for is born:—
But, at that gracious fount, the broken heart,
Each wreck'd affection, sternly tried, but true,
And loves that ran not smooth, and forced apart,
One draught makes whole, one draught unites anew.

III.

The heart grows young, the spirit quails no more,
By that false star which blinded, still misled—
Lo! the good vessel finds the friendly shore,
While lights, more bright and certain, shine o'erhead;
The pilgrim seeks, and gladdens at, that spring,
Which the bland seasons, from their fruitful store,
Crown with each blooming and each blessed thing,
Hope ever dream'd, or rapture knew, before.

IV.

A bird of beauty sings among the trees,
A silver strain, inviting, ever sweet,—
The waters ripple in the murmuring breeze,
That, to the minstrel, is an echo meet.

Their ditty is a soothing to the ear—
The tale they murmur hath a power to calm
The chiding pulse of love, the heart of fear,—
And those sweet waters, they are full of balm.

v.

Was thy fond plan of boyhood, wild—untaught
By sage experience and reflection cool?—
Did thy warm passions banish the true thought,
Till, grown to phrensy, folly seized the rule;
And blight was in thy bosom and thy brain,
And death seemed sweet, and life grew dark like night?
Thou art not hopeless!—thou shalt joy again,
Blessed by these waters with eternal light!

VI.

Wast thou a dreamer? Hadst thou in thy heart
Some pregnant fancy, which became, at length,
Of thy own spirit and wild sense a part,
Born at thy birth and strengthening with thy strength—
And did stern Time, and still relentless Truth,
Rob thee of thy delusion, when late years
Had taught thee what a credulous thing is youth?—
Drink of these waters and forget thy tears.

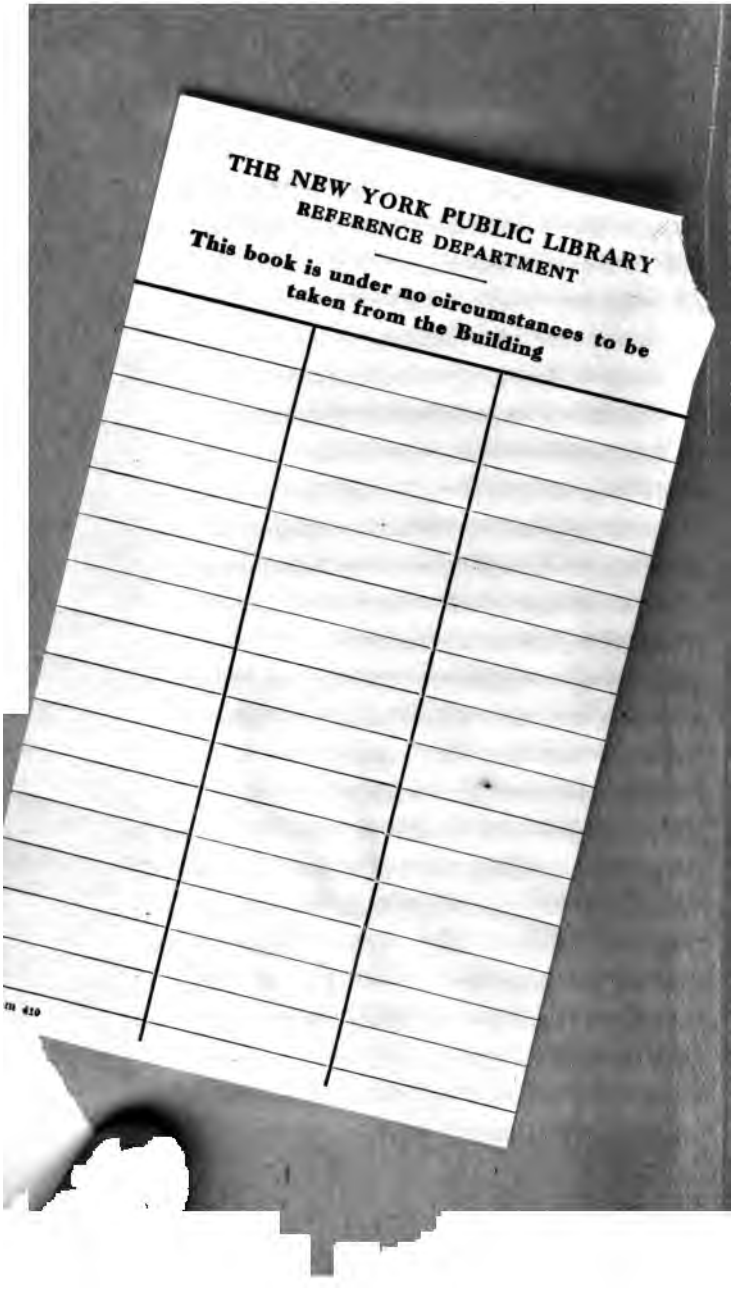
VII.

Had the stern Fortune interposed to blast
The growing buds of Nature, and to burst
The sacred mould in which twin hearts are cast,
Each wedded to the other from the first,—
Or was she false, who pledged herself to be,
Even to the last, through every change, to prove
The witness of a deathless faith to thee?—
Drink, and forget the false, in firmer love!

VIII.

Oh, give me of those waters! Let me haste
To dwell upon their verdant banks, and find,
Upon my fever'd lips, a fresher taste,
And a new feeling for my baffled mind.
Oh, let me all forget!—the dreary hours,
The faithless love, the fond, unfruitful dreams—
Reposing on its banks of living flowers,
And quaffing freely of its sacred streams.

THE END.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